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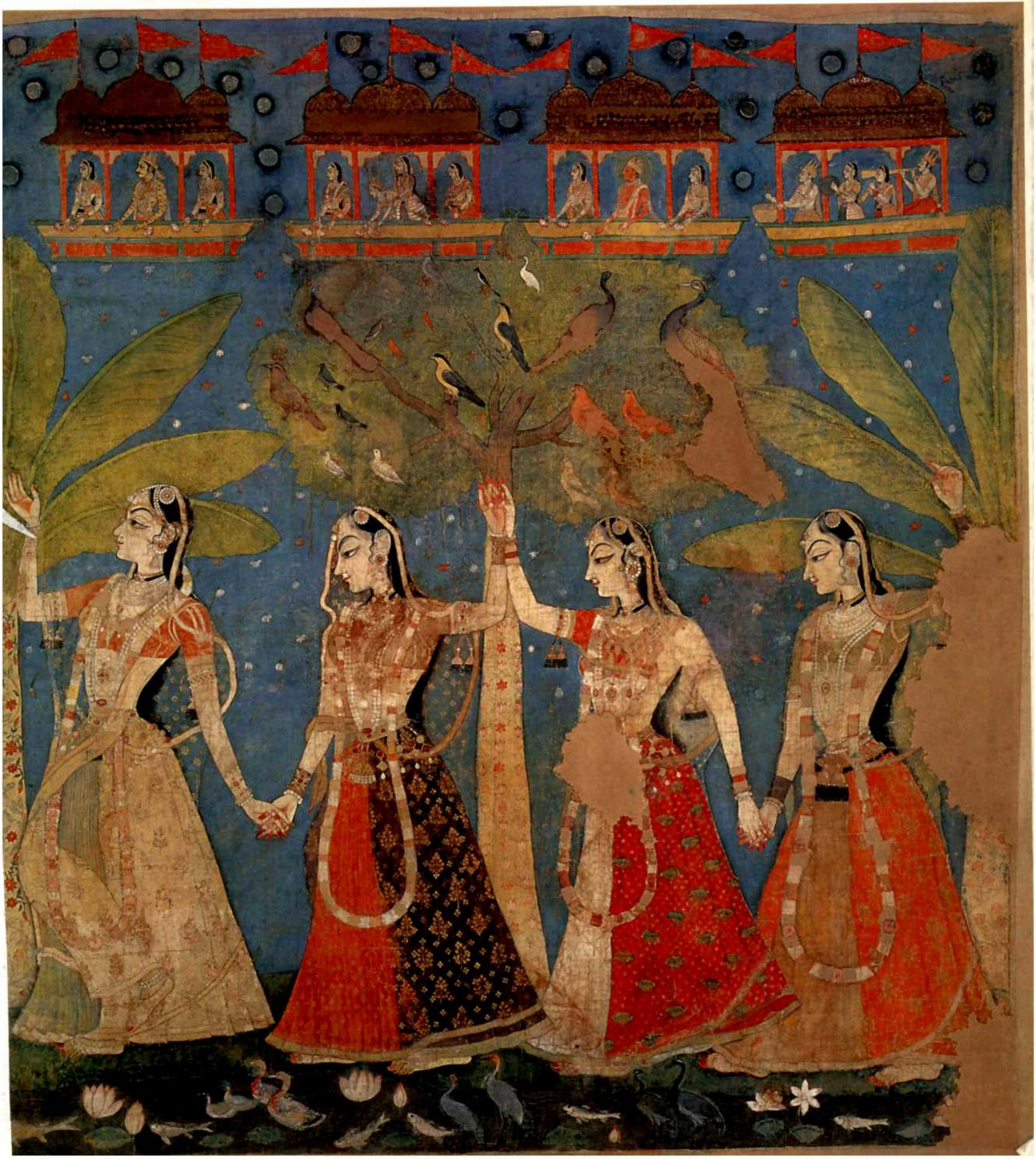

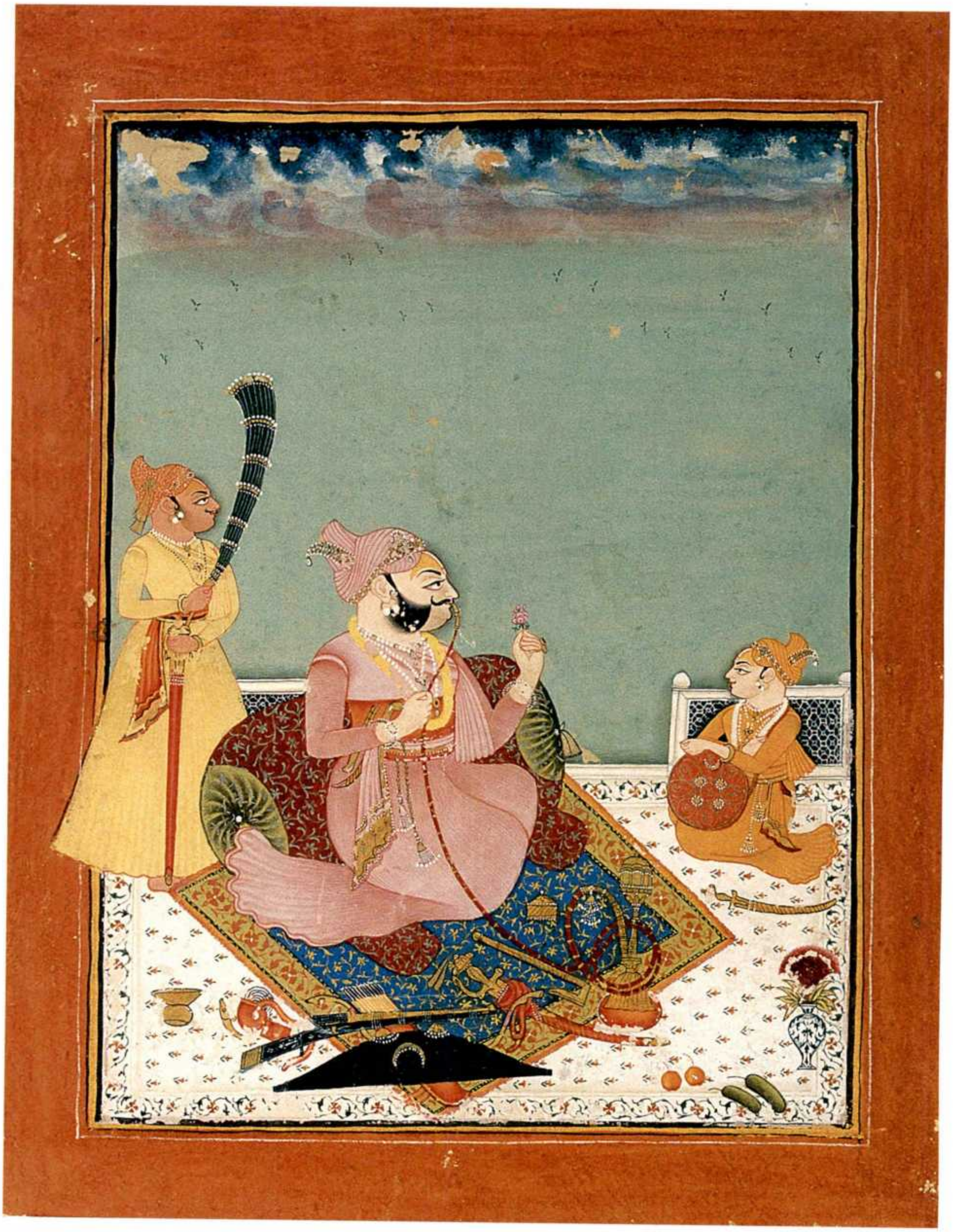

Maharao Ajit Singh of Bundi receiving his son. Bundi, circa 1770. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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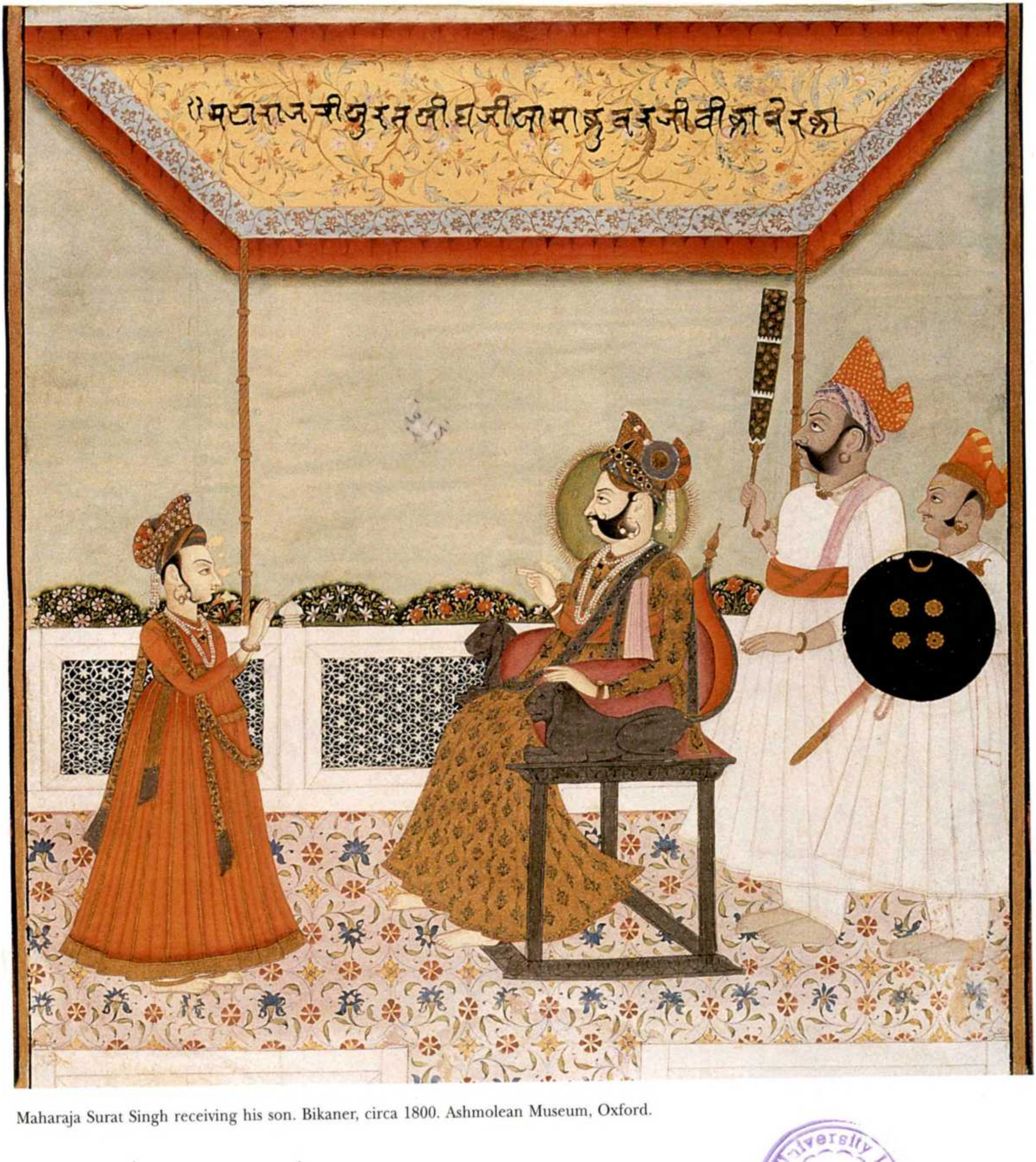
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Maharaja Surat Singh receiving his son. Bikaner, circa 1800. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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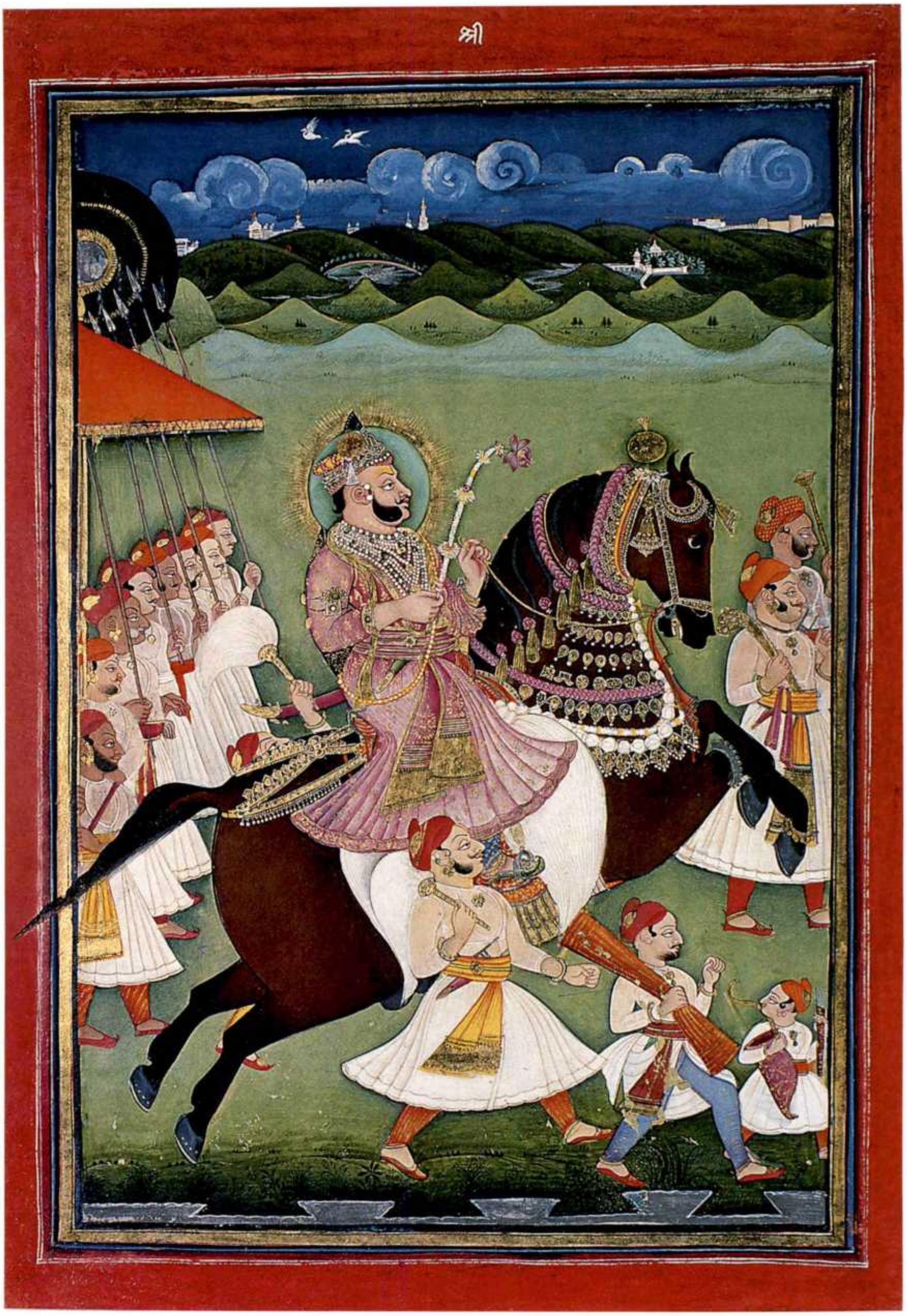

Rao Ram Singh II riding. Kota, circa 1840. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

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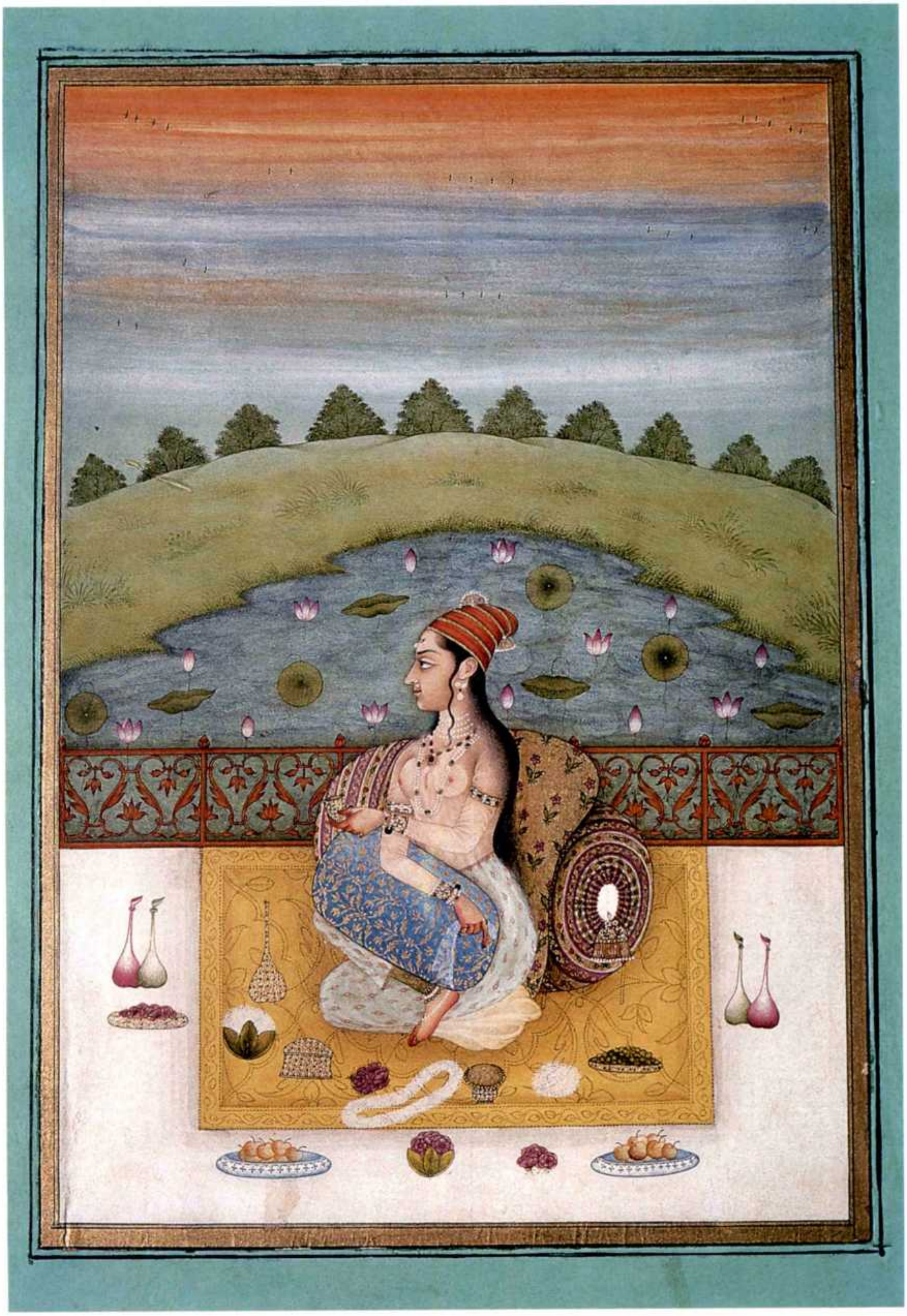

Lady on a terrace. Bikaner, circa 1690. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

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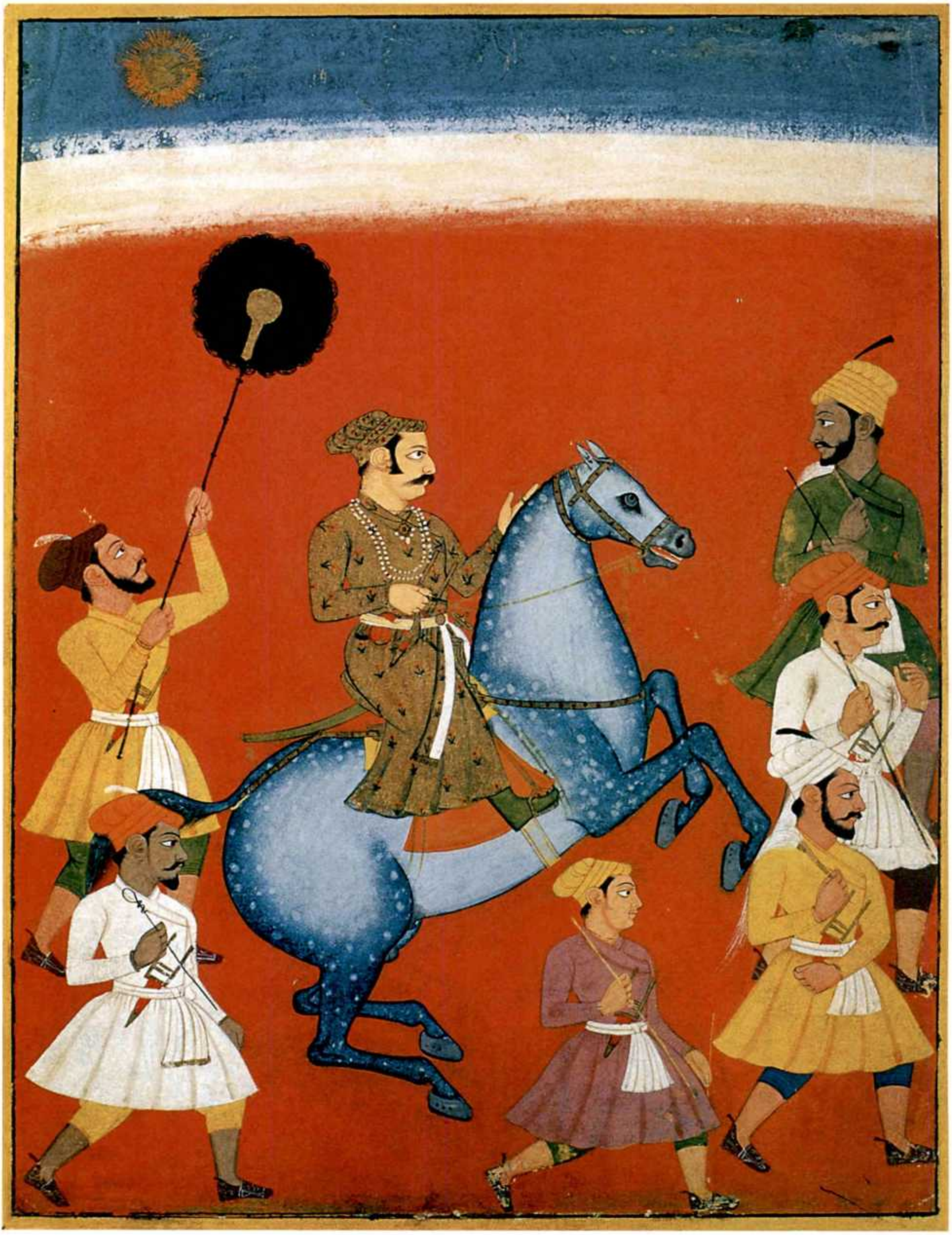

Maharana Raj Singh I of Mewar riding. Udaipur, circa 1670. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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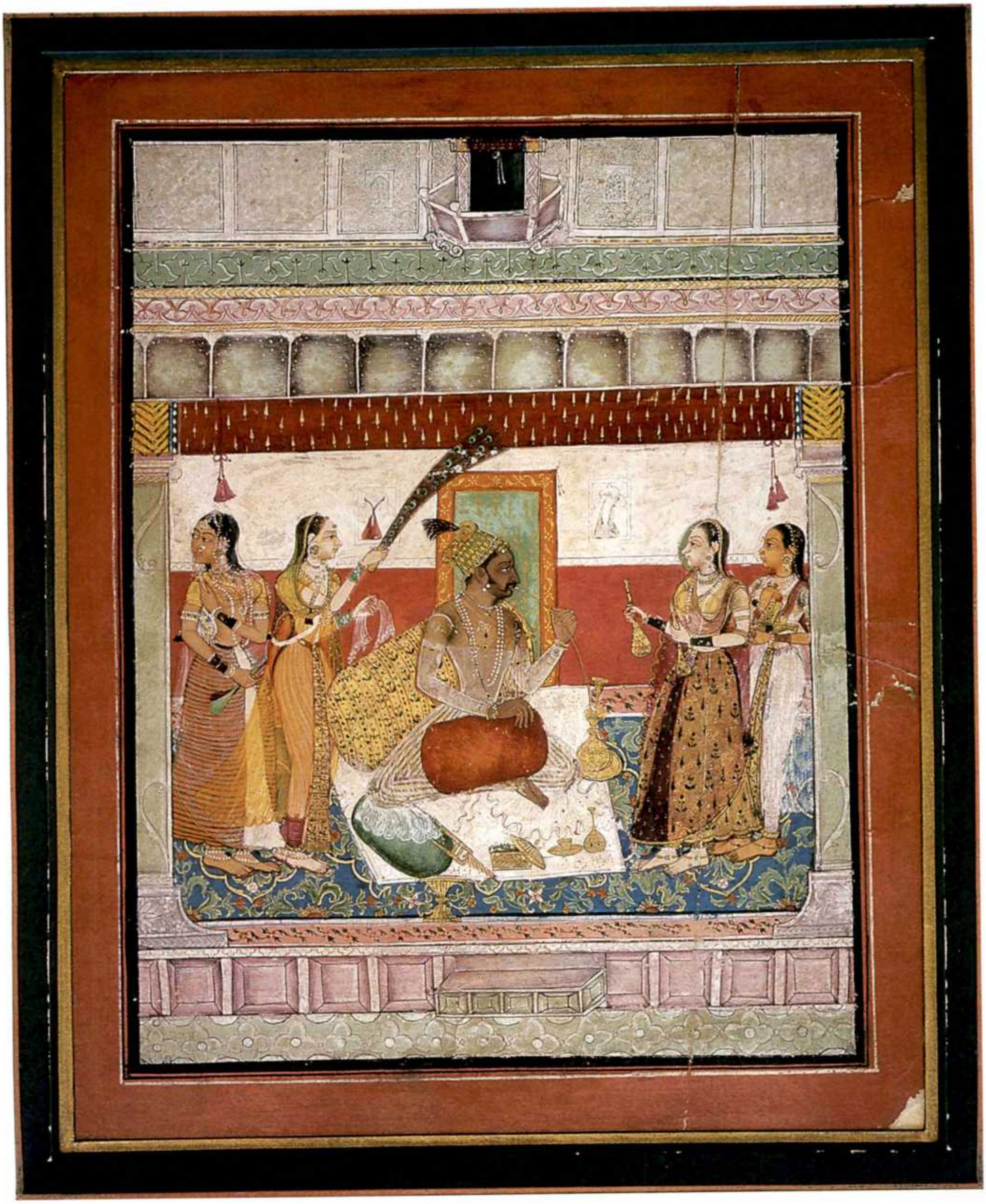

Rao Jagat Singh of Kota. Kota, circa 1670. Kanoria collection, Patna.

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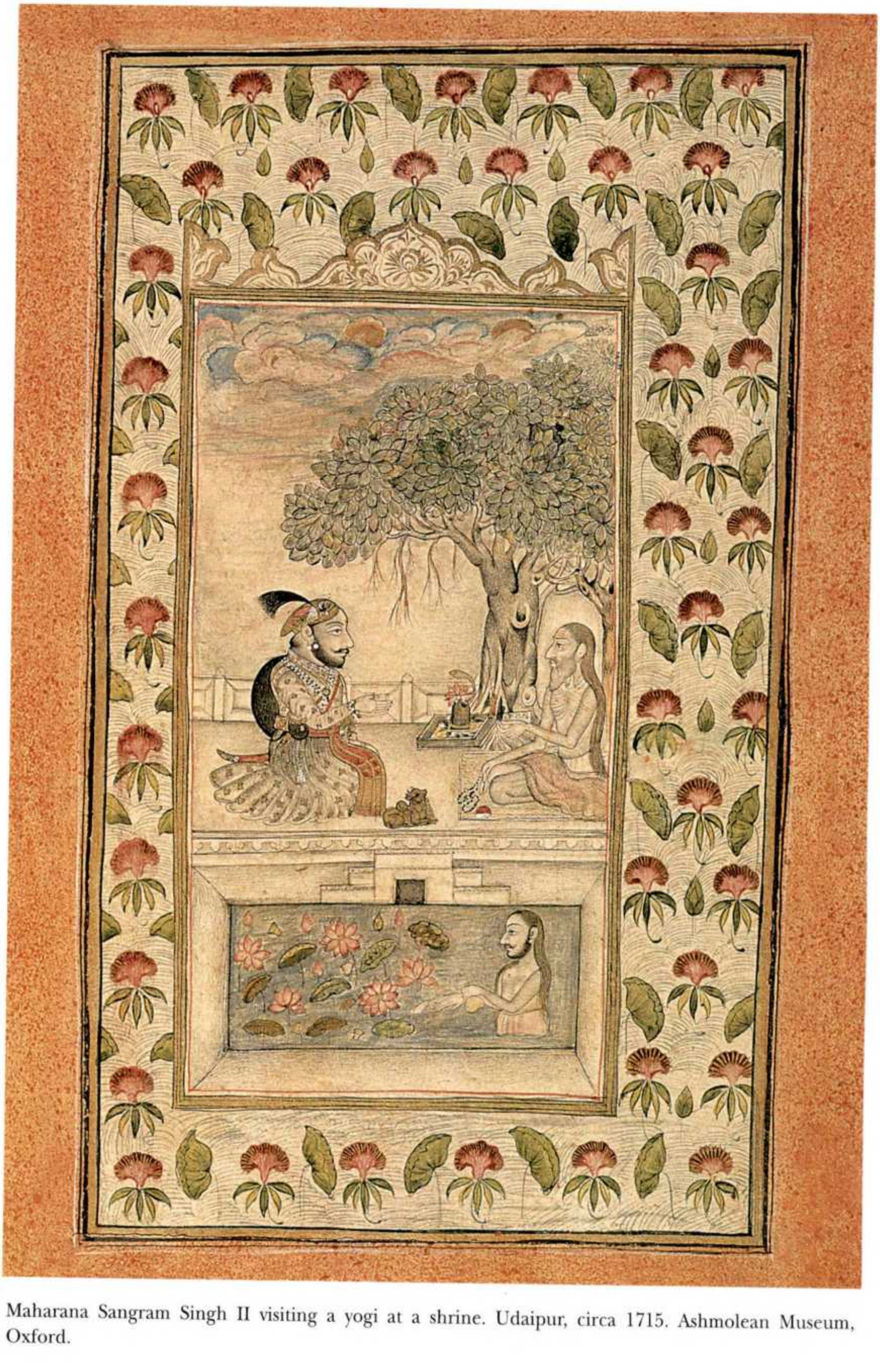

Maharana Sangram Singh II visiting a yogi at a shrine. Udaipur, circa 1715. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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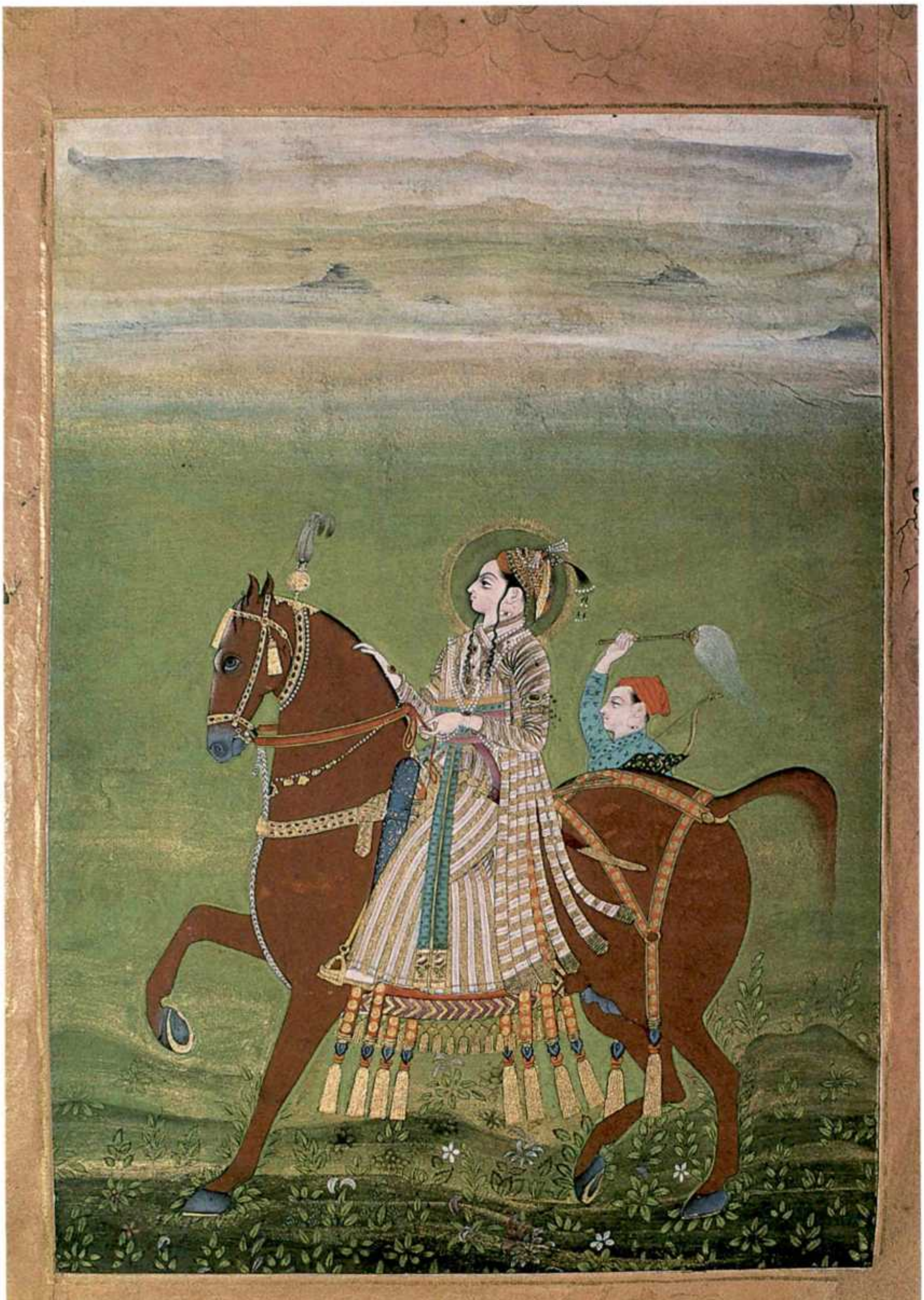

Prince Zorawar Singh riding. Bikaner, circa 1715. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

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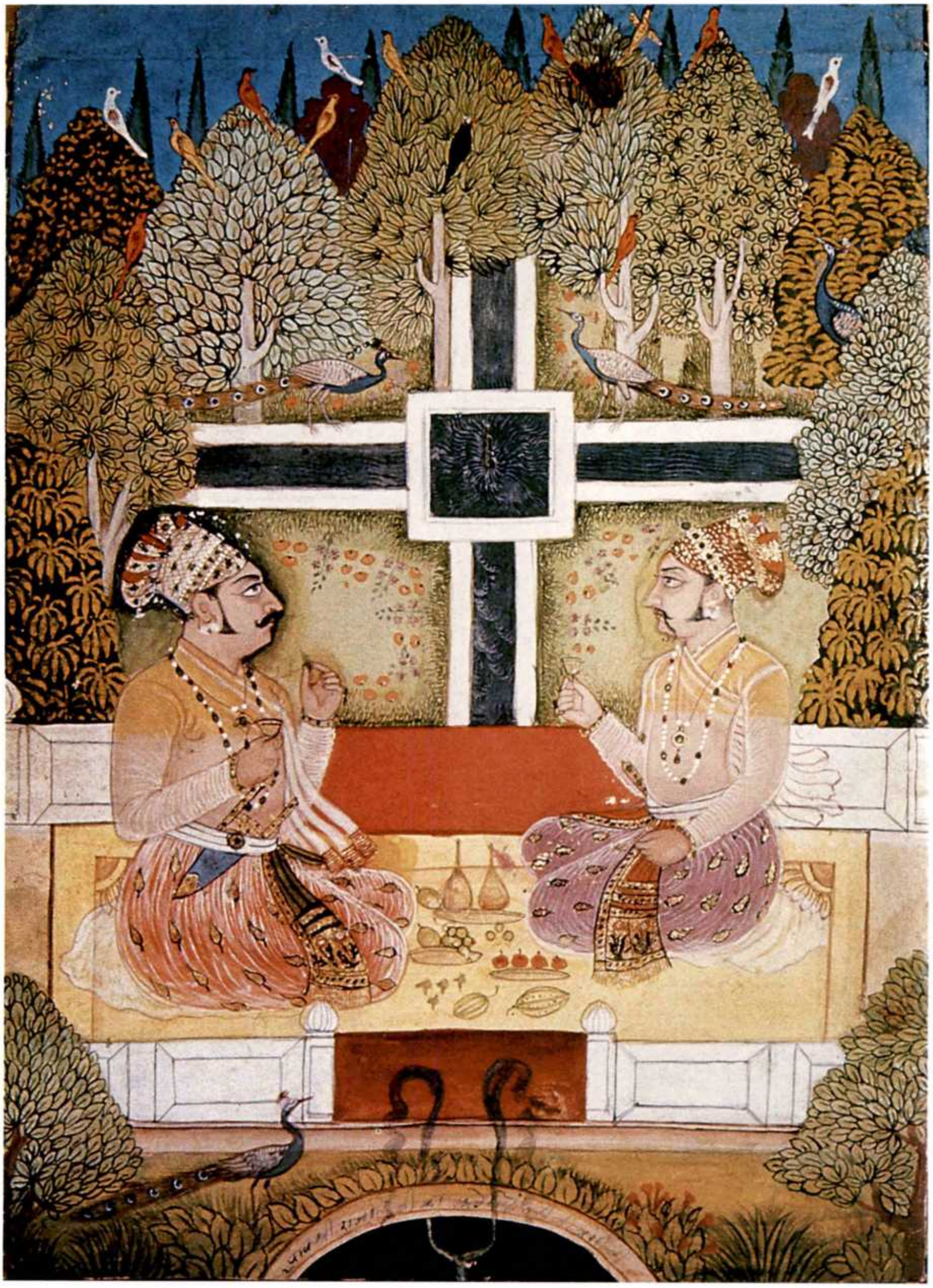

Raja Raj Singh and Fateh Singh. Junia, Ajmer region, circa 1700. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

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NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS
VOLUME 51 NUMBER 3 MARCH 2000

17-4-2001

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ntre for the Performing Arts at 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai 400 001.

arg Publications
my & Navy Building (3rd Floor), 148, M.G. Road, Mumbai 400 001, India.

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* From *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, edited by Andrew Topsfield, Marg Publications (March 2000).

Cover: A line of dancing gopis. Kishangarh, early eighteenth century. Gouache on cloth; 185 x 167 cm. Sir Howard Hodgkin collection, London. Photograph courtesy Sir Howard Hodgkin.

This issue has been designed by Naju Hirani.
Colour and black and white processing by Reproscan, Mumbai 400 093.
Printed by A.S. Vadiwala at Tata Donnelley Limited, Mumbai 400 025, India.

FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR'S DESK

Repeal the Act

In the summer of 1999, a commercial exhibition was held in America of beautifully carved doors from traditional Khond houses in Orissa. The doors had been sold by the Khonds both for economic gain as well as the desire to "modernize" their lifestyle. No one can stop progress or the right of the individual to dispose of his or her property in a democratic society. But how was it that so many doors found their way to America even when India has stringent laws about exporting art? Obviously, one reason is that there was no market for these wonderful doors in the country thanks to the Antiquities Registration Act of 1973. (There are other reasons as well, such as general apathy to tribal arts and culture; lack of resources in some museums or bureaucratic inertia in others with funds, etc.)

In 1973, led by Indira Gandhi, Parliament passed an Antiquities Registration Act that made it mandatory to register all art objects over one hundred years old with a government agency. This was done with the intention to stop the flight of Indian art abroad.

Even if one rejects the argument that the presence of Indian art in museums in other countries helps to introduce Indian culture (as indeed made evident in the 1980s when India was using its artistic heritage in a constant barrage of exhibitions to promote "trade"), has the Act succeeded in stemming the flow of art abroad? The answer must be a resounding NO.

All that the Act has succeeded in achieving is to provide employment by creating yet another bureaucracy whose task is to go around and make certain that every collector registers the objects he or she owns. Indeed, if instead, the government used the money to buy the major objects while allowing free trade with all others, as is done in most other countries with sensible policies, then the country could have kept at least some of the desirable art. At present the prospect of dealing with red tape every time one buys, sells, or inherits a work of art has served to discourage art collecting within the country; still, all art – fine and not so fine – leaves the country with ease and impunity to find eager buyers abroad.

It is not difficult to imagine how easy it is to export objects, given their dollar value and the meagre salaries paid to customs officers and registrars of antiquities. In a country rife with corruption and bribery at the highest levels, it would be foolhardy to think that the people at the lower ends of the economic ladder will be more scrupulous about money matters. Besides, Indian paintings are easily transportable because of their small size and jewellery can be taken out openly as personal property. Tribal art continues to suffer from the arrogance of the superior attitude of caste Hindus, religious conversions, and the urge to become modern (after all, a carved door or a bronze image of a family deity can easily buy a television set).

By all accounts, the Act has not worked and so it should be repealed. As we step into a new century and millennium, a more sensible policy should be adopted that will encourage both dealers and collectors at home and thereby keep some of the art in the country. Vigorous efforts should be made through television and exhibitions to educate the communities across the country that are rich in heritage sites as to why our heritage should be saved. Instruction about and with art, as a major and most visible expression of culture, should be integrated into the school curriculum so that the future generations of engineers, computer scientists, and doctors do not grow up without any knowledge of or empathy for their own heritage.

These may seem like revolutionary ideas but indeed if India is to make a mark in the new century, we must be radical thinkers. Repealing the 1973 Antiquities Registration Act would be a first step in the right direction.

Pratapaditya Pal

EARLY PAINTING AT BUNDI

Joachim K. Bautze

The principalities of Bundi and Kota constituted Harauti or Haravàti, "the country of the Haras", the most important branch of the Chauhan dynasty. Painting at Bundi already existed in the fifteenth century. Its style, however, was so close to the Western Indian style favoured by the Jain community that it can hardly be called "Bundi" as such.

After Rao Surjan Hara of Bundi (r. 1554–85) had accepted Mughal suzerainty in March 1569, following Akbar's siege of Ranthambhor, a strong Mughal influence is felt in the paintings done for Bundi's rulers. Rao Surjan surrendered the great fortress of Ranthambhor to the Mughals on very favourable terms. This event is illustrated in a frequently published, near contemporary painting of the *Akbar Nama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (acc. no. IS 2-1896.75/117). The official policy of the Bundi rulers thereafter, was to cooperate with the ruling power. Kumar Duda, Rao Surjan's eldest son, it must be noted, never accepted his father's cooperation with Akbar. He must have considered his father's policy as being against the Rajput cause and hence he still supported Bundi's former ally, the Maharana of Mewar who fought the invaders. Duda, referred to as Daud or Doda by Islamic historians, ventured a guerilla war against the Mughals, until he was defeated on imperial command by his father's and his younger brother's armies. He died in August 1585.

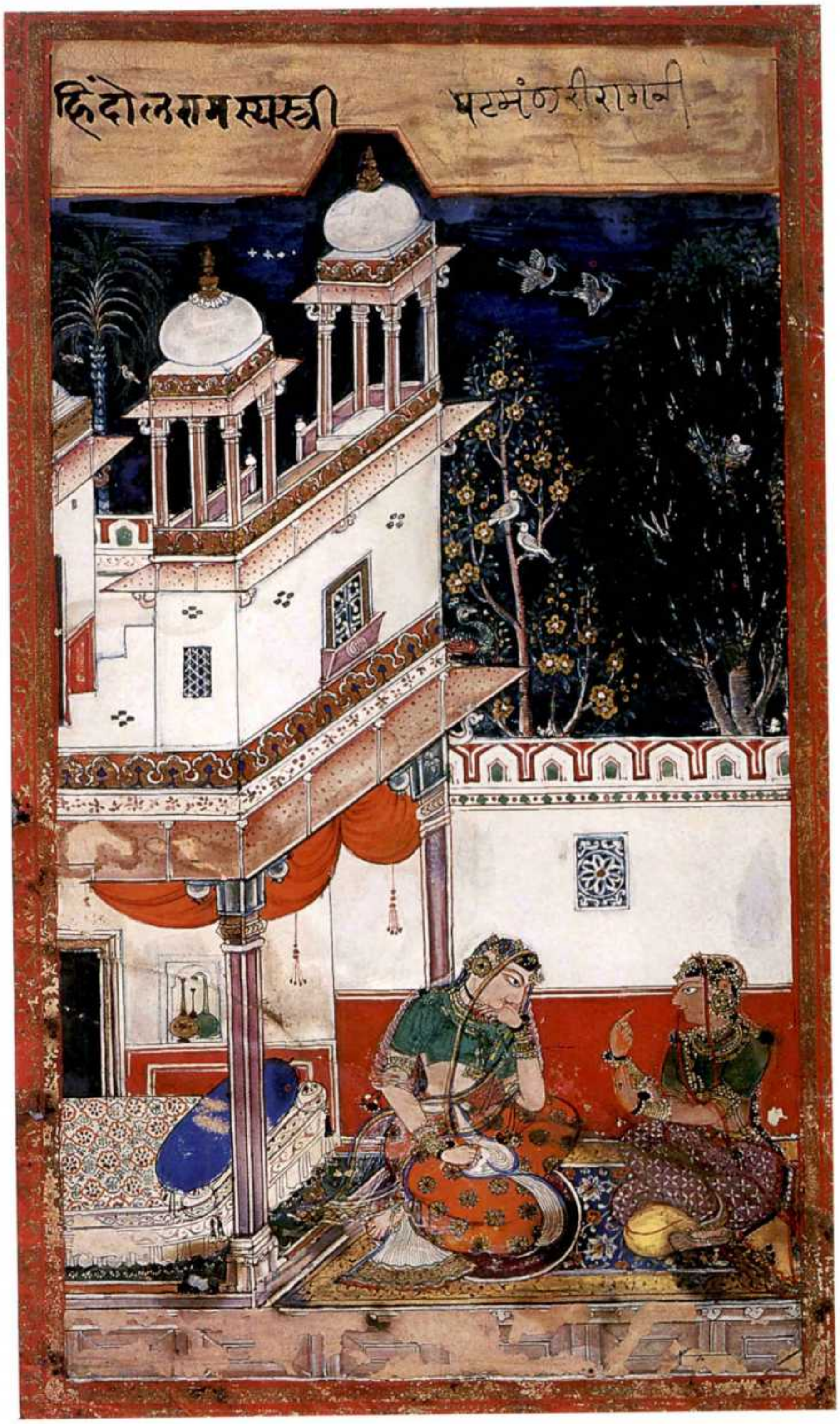
Rao Surjan served the Mughals in Allahabad, Bihar, Peshawar, and Bengal with a *mansab* of 2,000, before he died at Banaras. The name of the Hara Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri, for some time the Mughal capital under Akbar, certainly alludes to the Hara presence at the imperial Mughal court.

Rao Bhoj Hara and the Dated Beginnings of Bundi Painting

When Bhoj, Surjan's second son, succeeded his father in 1585, he was thirty-four years of age. Five years later he still must have been posted at Chunar near Banaras, where his father had lived at the end of his life. At Chunar, disciples of the founders of the Mughal atelier of painting (Mir Sayyid 'Ali and 'Abd al-Samad) completed a *ragamala* of thirty-six paintings, which afterwards became the standard topic of painting for almost all subsequent Hara chieftains. This *ragamala* "was ready on the day of Wednesday at the time of the mid-day prayer in the place Chumar...on the date of the 29th of the month Rabi'al-Akhir, year 999 [February 25, 1591]...". This set of paintings with its Nagari inscriptions in the text panel constitutes the oldest dated *ragamala* and the earliest dated proof of Mughalized painting done for a Rajput ruler. That these paintings were commissioned by a Hara is shown by the very numerous later copies of this set of paintings, which in course of time became more and more Rajput and less and less Mughal in style. Figure 1, illustrating the Patamanjari *ragini* from this dated set, shows some typical features of this early Bundi style. The treatment of nature is very realistic, and everywhere outside the walled premises of the palace are various kinds of birds; in other paintings from this set there are also scorpions, squirrels, peacocks, frogs, fishes, bees, etc. Large areas of basic colours are left undisturbed by patterns. In the present example, the white walls are devoid of linear divisions and the red surface in the lower part of the wall shows no relief or painting. The almost square heads of the women are all shown in strict profile with the eye painted in frontally. The earrings are large and the *pallu* of the sari is separated from the head as if on an air cushion; it does not rest directly on the hair or shoulders as it should.

Figure 2, a portrait of "Hara Rao Bhoj", according to the Nagari inscription on the back, belongs to a set of Bikaner portraits of the rulers of Bundi. It is a later version of an often published painting from 1606 by Nur Muhammad, now in the Sidhu collection, California, which reportedly represents Rao Bhoj Rathor, uncle of Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner. Earlier writers have already remarked on the Deccani fashion of the Rao's costume, and it is probably due to the Nagari inscription, which identifies the subject with a member of the Rathor clan, that the ruler has been known as Bhoj Rathor ever since its first publication in 1949. Figure 2 and its earlier version, however, originally stem from the same collection, as is attested by two identical stamp-impressions on the back of the paintings, as well as the signature of "Khet Singh". In 1606 Rao Bhoj Hara was fifty-five years old, an age which would suit the earlier, dated version very well. Besides, in the early seventeenth century Rao Bhoj actually served in the Deccan: he accompanied Rai Singh of Bikaner to Ahmednagar in 1601 and met Rai Singh again in 1605. Moreover, he was most probably an uncle of Rai Singh Rathor since he was married to at least two Rathor princesses, one of whom was among the eight

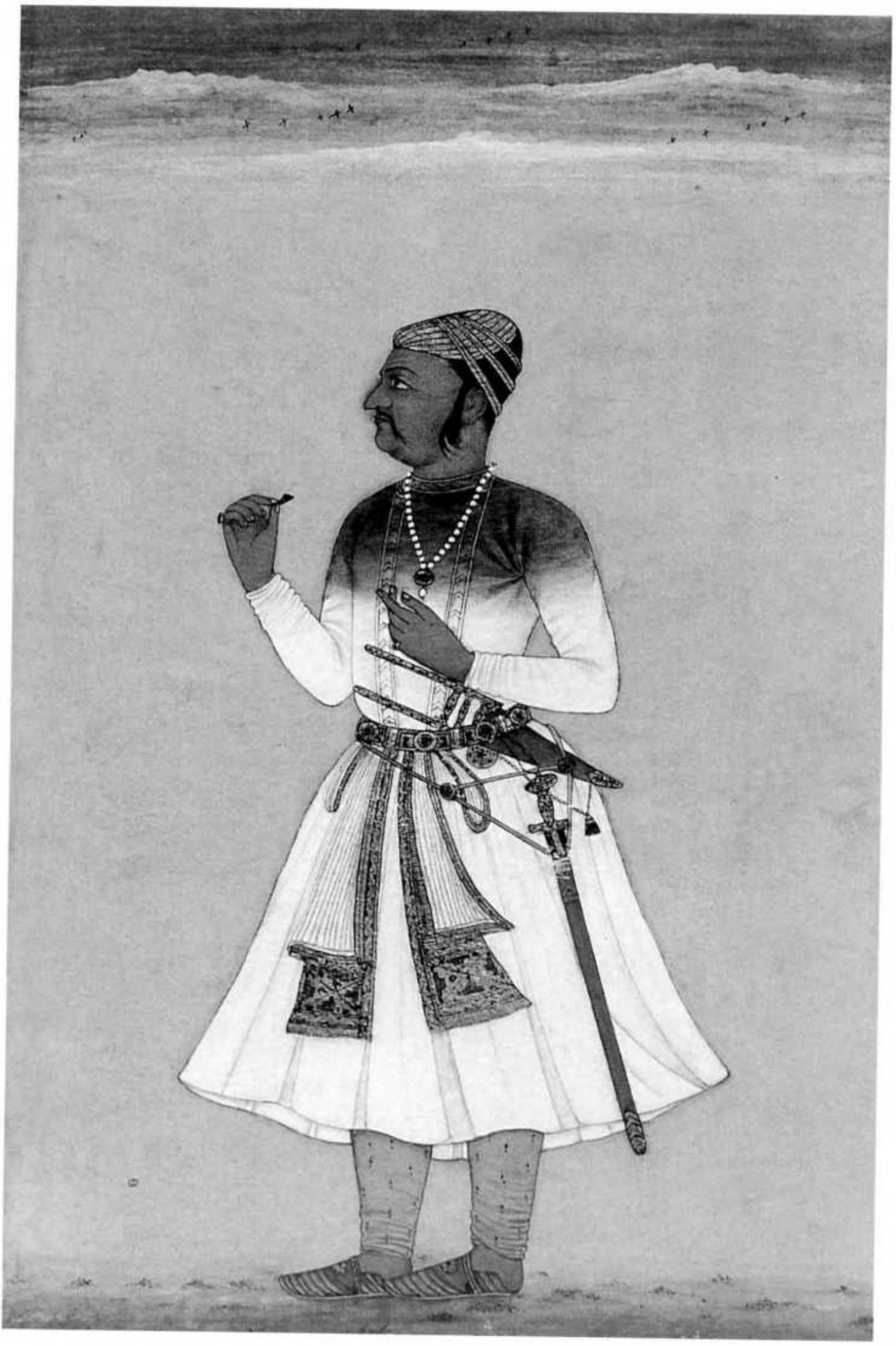
1
Patamanjari *ragini*. From the Chunar *ragamala*. Chunar, Sub-Imperial Mughal style for a Bundi ruler, dated 1591. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 20.5 x 11.0 cm (within inner rules). Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



satis, or women who immolated themselves on the Rao's funeral pyre. Another Rathor princess of Rao Bhoj is mentioned as "Rathor Akhaikumari" by the Bundi chronicler Surya Malla Mishran.

Rao Bhoj Rathor, who is recorded nowhere else, is hence in all probability Rao Bhoj Hara, the said ruler of Bundi. This is even more plausible when we remember that the Bikaner royal collection once included a near-contemporary portrait of Rao Surjan Hara as well.

2
Rao Bhoj Hara. From a set of portraits of the rulers of Bundi. Bikaner, circa 1680. Opaque watercolour, silver and gold on paper; 29.8 x 19.9 cm (folio). Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



A slightly later Dutch description of the city of Agra, for many years the Mughal capital, mentions a palace of Rao Bhoj on the river Yamuna ("...van Radia Bohos, den vader van den tegenwoordigen Ray Routan..."). The enumeration of Rao Bhoj among the other Mughal and Rajput nobles underlines Jahangir's statement that he (Bhoj) was "included among the great Amirs".

Rao Ratan, the Most Powerful Hara of the Seventeenth Century

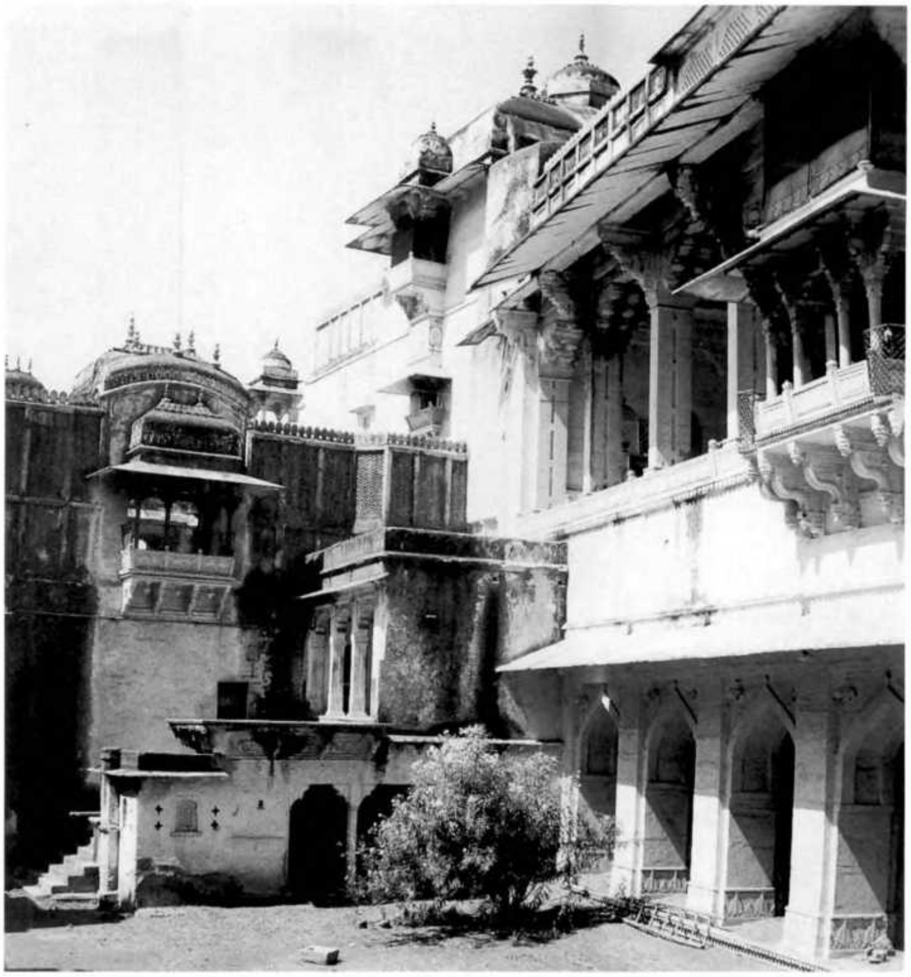
Ratan, eldest son of Rao Bhoj, was born on the tenth of the bright half of Agahan (November–December) in the Vikrama year 1625 (1568 CE). He became the ruler of Bundi in VS 1664 (1608 CE) after his father's death. In early 1608, Emperor Jahangir noted: "At this time Ratan, son of Bhoj Hara, who is one of the chief Rajput nobles, came to the camp and waited on me, bringing three elephants as an offering. One of these was much approved, and they valued it in the office at 15,000 rupees. It was entered among my private elephants, and I gave it the name of Ratangaj.... I dignified Ratan with the title of Sarbuland Ray." A contemporary Mughal portrait of that elephant has survived in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. This reference to elephants in the possession of the Hara rulers attests to their predilection for this royal animal, which is otherwise shown in numerous paintings on walls as well as on paper.

Rao Ratan Sarbuland Ray was sent on campaigns by Jahangir. In 1614 he fought against Rana Amar Singh of Mewar, Bundi's former suzerain. A year later Ratan's brother Hriday Narayan was sent to Kangra in the north, where he fought until 1620. In 1617 Rao Ratan moved to Burhanpur in the Deccan. He was recalled from there to the court in 1623 and received "a special jewelled dagger". From Agra he was to go to the Deccan again, in order to pursue the army of the rebellious prince

Khurram, the future Shah Jahan. In course of time, he became "chargé d'affaires" of the Deccan and was rightly called the "incarnation of loyalty and chivalry". Often he was strongly pressed, and it is known that he fought from the back of an elephant called "Light of the World". He so gallantly defended Burhanpur from the attacks of the united armies of Malik Ambar and prince Khurram, that he received the further title of Ram Raj, "than which there is no higher title in the Dakhin". He was also awarded the *mansab* of 5,000 *zat* (infantry) and 5,000 *sawar* (cavalry), a rank which he held from 1624 to his death on the 10th of the bright half of Margashirsha in the Vikrama year "elephant [8], snake [8], taste [6], earth [1]", i.e. 1688 (1631 CE) following the Bundi historian.

Rao Ratan had taken over the palace of his father in Agra, where he would have seen the murals in the Bagh-i Nur Afshan, commonly called Ram Bagh. This probably led him to have the Badal Mahal in Bundi, also built by his father, decorated with frescos which are stylistically still very Mughal but betray more of a Rajput influence than any other paintings done hitherto for a Hara ruler. His building activity is best shown by the Ratna Daulat, today called Daulat Ratan, within the ancient palace complex of Bundi. This part of the palace can be seen in the right-hand part of figure 3. The topmost part is occupied by the Badal Mahal.

In the Deccan, where the Rao spent the greater part of the rest of his life, he founded Ratanpur near Burhanpur. In Burhanpur, Rao Ratan must have met a European merchant, Mr Willoughby, from whom he purchased "some tapestry", presumably from Arras. Of the 18,450 rupees due, according to the traveller Peter Mundy, "Raw Rutton" only paid 1,000 by November 1630. Echoes of these tapestries can still be seen in the "farangi" frescos of the Badal Mahal in Bundi, to which we will refer below.

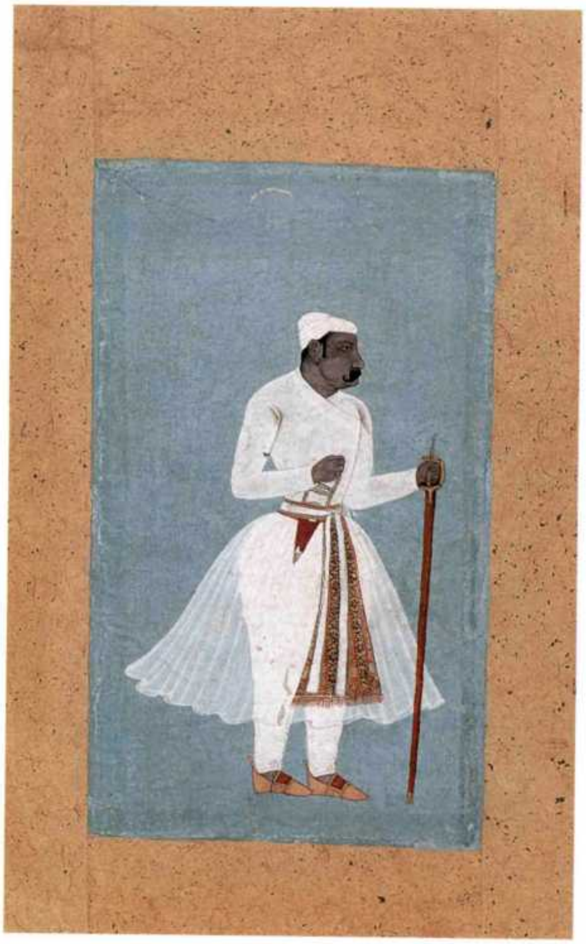


3

Inner courtyard within the old palace of Bundi with the Daulat Ratan to the right, the Badal Mahal, centre top, and the courtyard facing the Chhattar Mahal, left. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

No other Hara of the seventeenth century was more often portrayed than Rao Ratan, and it is not surprising when we see him inspecting a painting of an elephant amidst his nobles, as part of a large mural in his own palace in Bundi. No more surprising are certain Deccani influences, such as the long sword or the Deccani shawl worn as a sign of honour and rank. Rao Ratan appears to be of lighter complexion in the wall-paintings of the palace of his ancestors than in a number of miniature paintings, especially those executed by Mughal (not Rajput) artists. Figure 4, an inscribed portrait in a Sub-Imperial Mughal style, shows him at an advanced age with a slightly darker complexion, as he appears in a few other portraits as well.

In the absence of Rao Ratan, Bundi was ruled by his eldest son, Gopinath, who was born on the second day of the bright half of

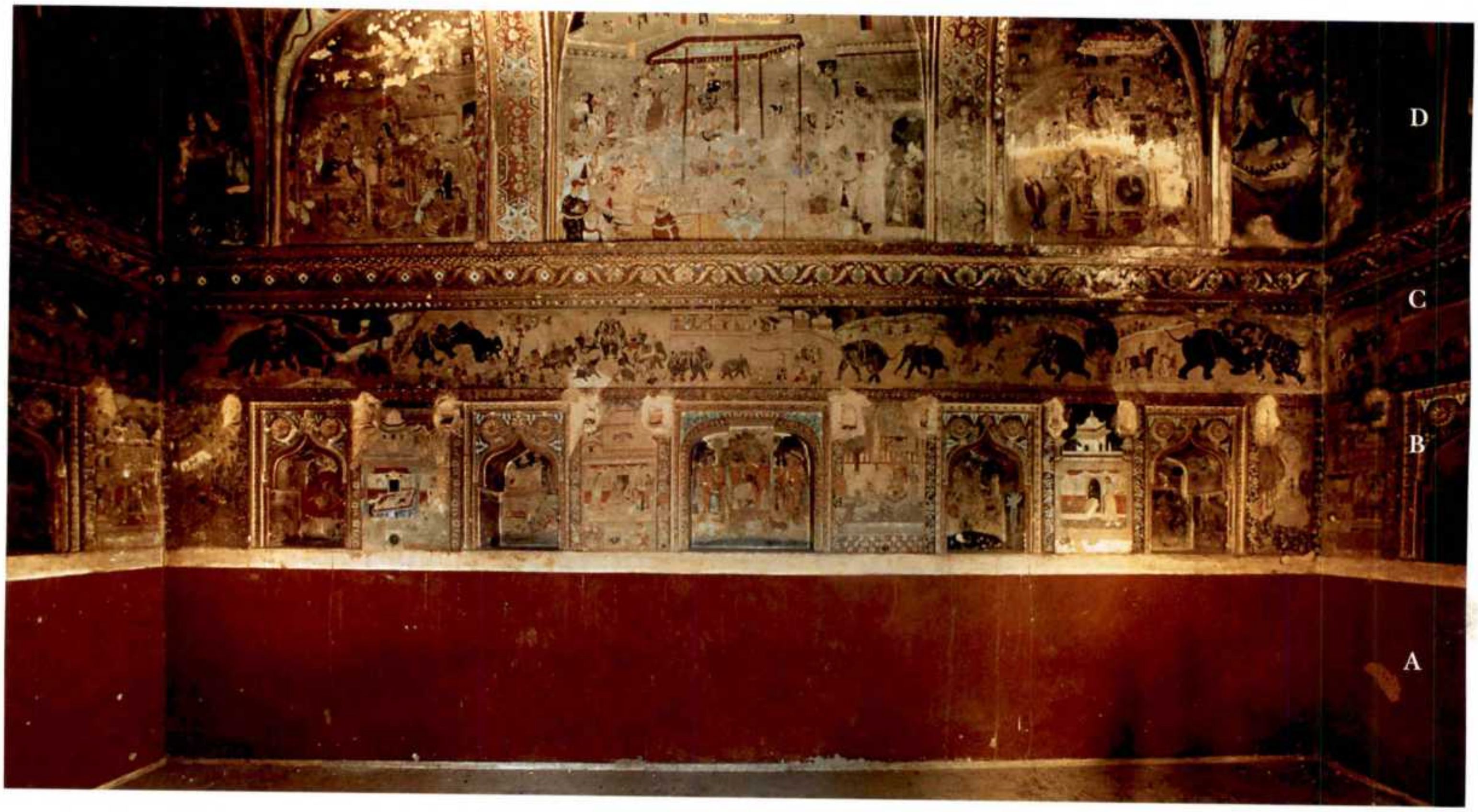


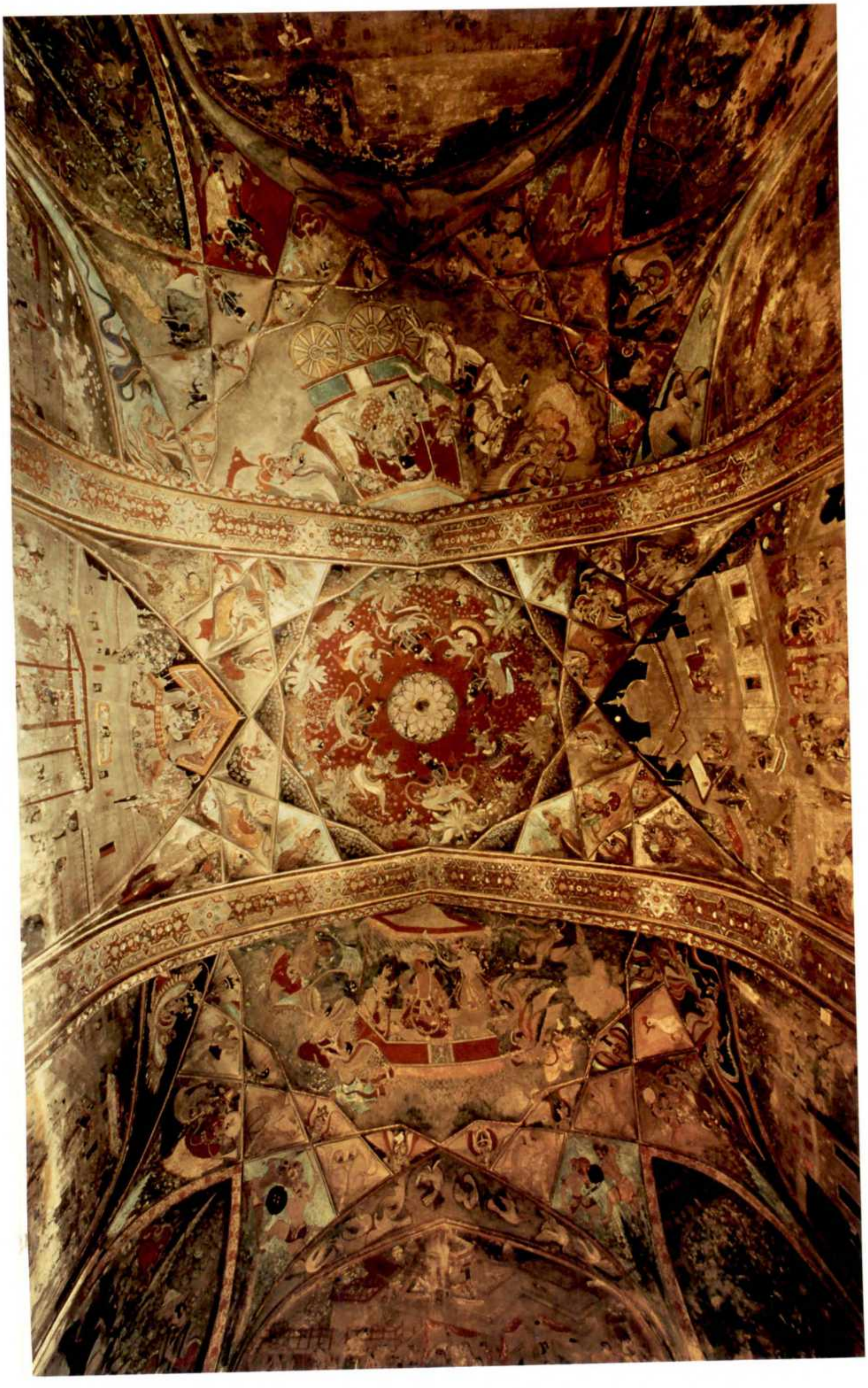
4
Rao Ratan Hara. Formerly in the "Jotdan" (royal collection) of Mewar; Sub-Imperial Mughal style in Rajasthan, circa 1630. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 19.7 x 12.3 cm (folio); 13.6 x 8.0 cm (image). Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

Bhadrapad in VS 1646 (1589 CE). Besides Gopinath, Rao Ratan had three more sons (Madho, Hari, and Jagannath), and two daughters (Badankumari and Harikumari). Gopinath married eleven princesses and had thirteen sons. He died, in circumstances which are not entirely clear, during his father's lifetime. It was hence Gopinath's eldest son Shatru Sal who succeeded to the throne of Bundi with the *mansab* of 2,000/3,000, the title Rao, and the fief of Bundi. Shatru Sal followed the example of his predecessor Rao Ratan and presented forty elephants to Shah Jahan.

The Badal Mahal Frescos

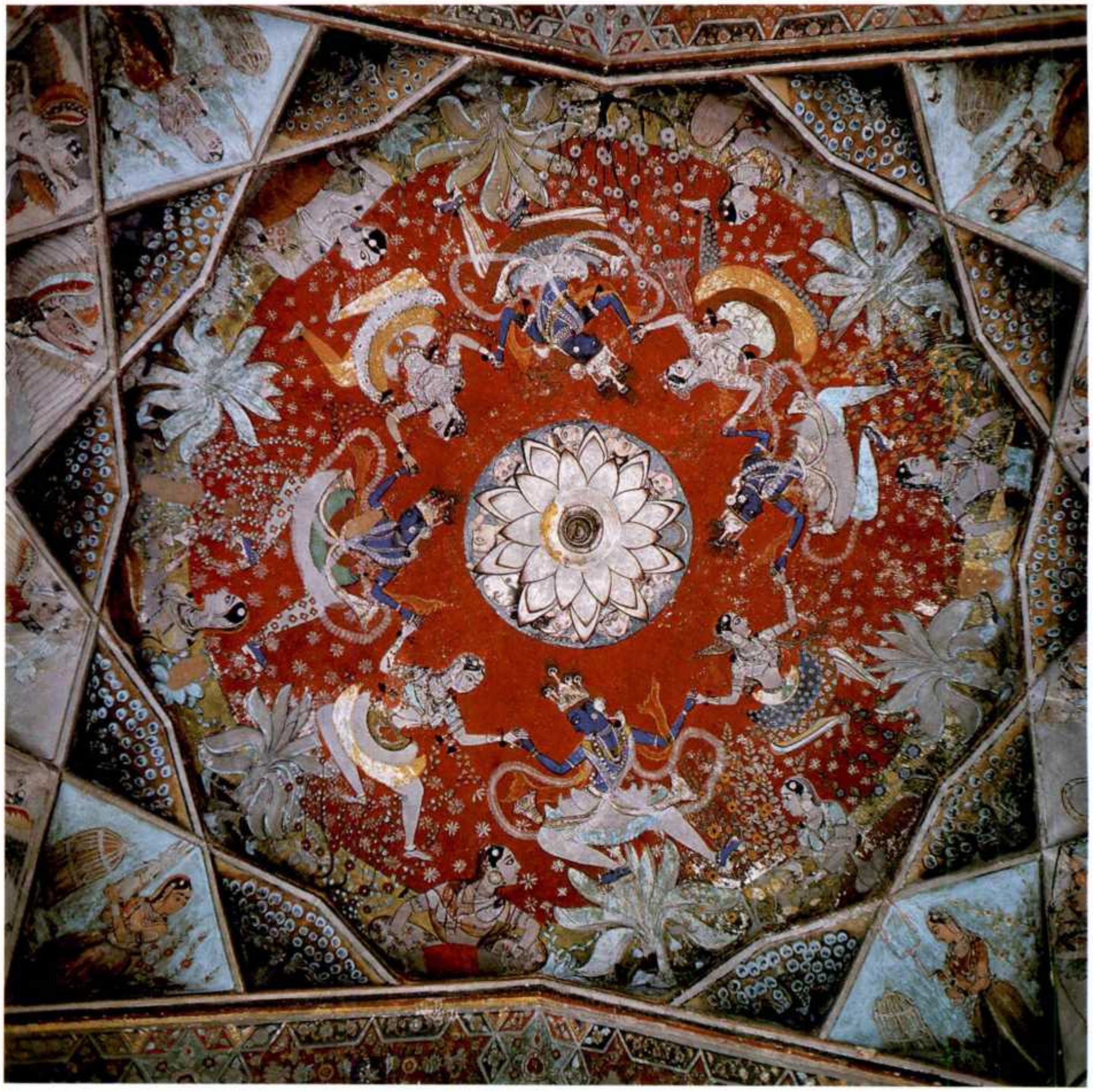
Despite the fact that Rao Ratan figures prominently in the wall-paintings of the Badal Mahal, they were – due to his prolonged absences – in all probability not commissioned by him, but either by his son Gopinath or one of his queens. The murals within the Badal Mahal can be divided into five different, more or less horizontal levels; the northern





5
(facing page)
The northern wall within the Badal Mahal, in the old palace of Bundi. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

6
The painted ceiling of the Badal Mahal, Bundi, circa 1620–30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



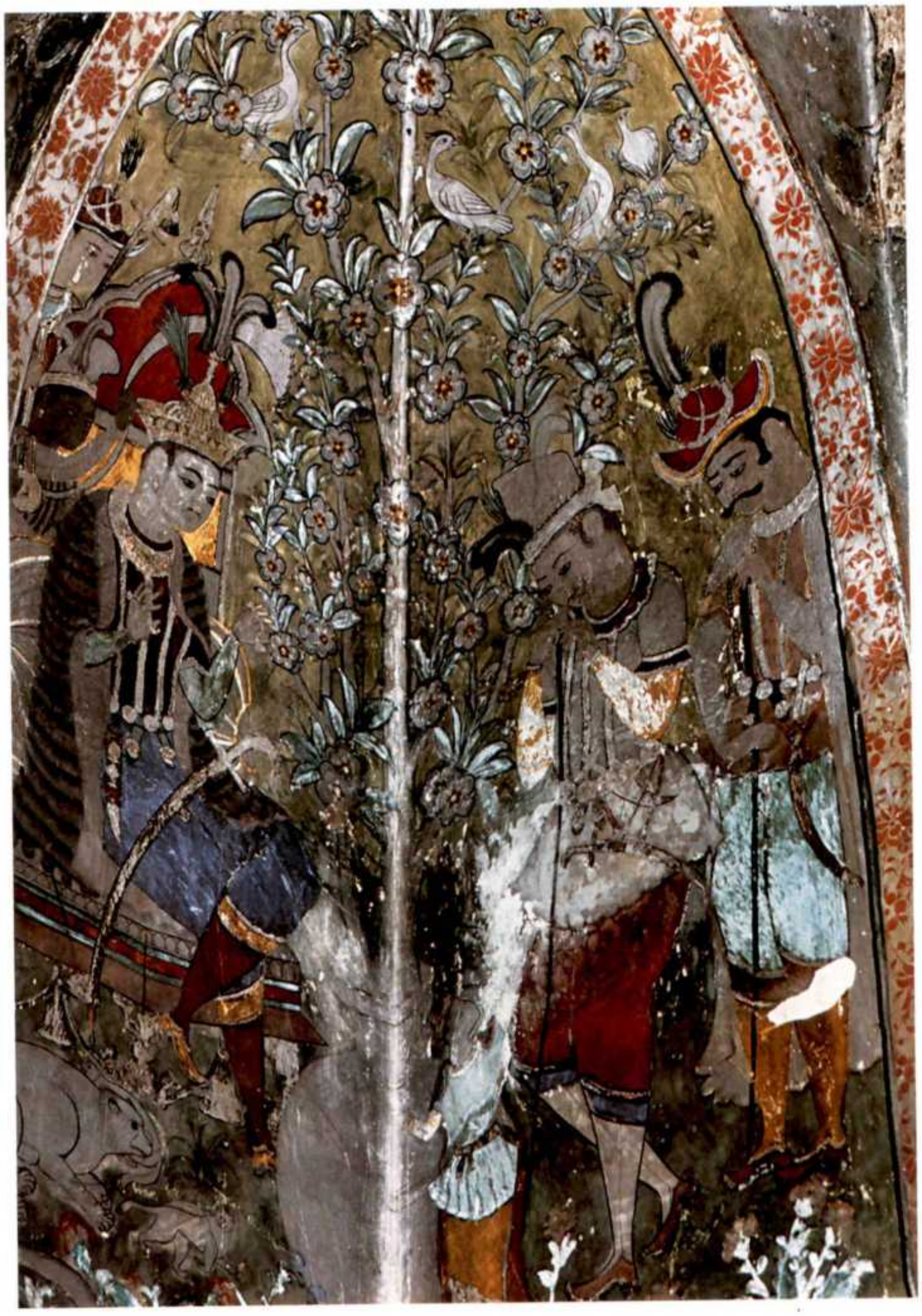
7
The central cupola of the painted ceiling of the Badal Mahal, Bundi: Krishna dancing the Rasamandala with the full autumn moon in the centre, and dancing peacocks and women holding burning candles in the adjoining squinches, circa 1620–30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

wall can be seen in figure 5. Level A comprises the wall above the floor and below eye-level. As in figure 1, it is painted red, and measures about 1.42 m in height. Level B is marked by mostly vertical recesses (thirteen in all) and other vertical areas of rectangular shape. It measures about 94 cm in height and basically contains a *ragamala*, the major subject of my monograph published in 1987. Level C, an uninterrupted band, 56 cm in height, is situated above eye-level, about 2.45 m from the floor. This level illustrates, in a kind of continuing narrative, events from the life of Rao Ratan. It includes the depiction of various sports such as elephant fights, polo games, and several hunting scenes. Level D is the last level on the perpendicular wall. It is situated above a floral band visible in figure 5 and consists of painted areas with a pointed arch. The murals within these arches mainly illustrate events from the lives of both Krishna and Rama and have to be seen together with the large frescos on the ceilings: level E. This constitutes the paintings in the squinch nets, the central cupola, and the two adjoining half-cupolas, as demonstrated by figure 6. In the central cupola, for which see also figure 7, Krishna dances the round dance with the gopis. In the centre of this Rasamandala appears the full moon which also serves as a lotus with petals which shelter the gods who have assembled to witness Krishna's dance. Clockwise around the central cupola flies Rama with Sita and Lakshmana in the magical Pushpakavimana, carried in the manner of a palanquin by angel-like female figures in the eastern half-cupola. In the opposite half-cupola flies Krishna with his favourite beloved in a carriage drawn by two horses. Ganesha acts as Krishna's charioteer while further angelic figures escort the chariot through the sky. The squinch nets around Krishna are filled with the ten avataras of Vishnu while the same areas around Rama are painted with scenes from the *Ramayana* or life of Rama.

Figure 7 reveals more details of the painted ceiling. The colours are strong and bright. The blue-complexioned Krishna contrasts effectively with the predominant red which the artist selected for the background. The green pigment of the banana trees placed in each corner of this ceiling star has flaked badly and, if intact, would have dramatically enhanced the overall effect of this composition. Peacocks with spread tails in the adjoining segments serve as a frame, while women with burning candles in the four corners seem to illuminate the central cupola which otherwise receives comparatively little daylight; this is why the colours here are still unfaded and appear in their original freshness.

Each of the four corners of level D is painted with a scene showing life-size European characters, as in figure 8 showing one of these compositions. These four murals constitute the earliest proof *in situ* of the so-called "farangi theme" in Rajasthani painting. The "farangis" are dressed in a mixed European-Indian fashion, but basically what the Indian artist considered to be European. Some appear to be blond-haired; they all wear European swords and a rather unusual headdress, and are all shown in three-quarter view as a rule. As might be expected, they are generally of fair complexion. The colourful flowering shrubs in some of these murals betray a certain Deccani influence.

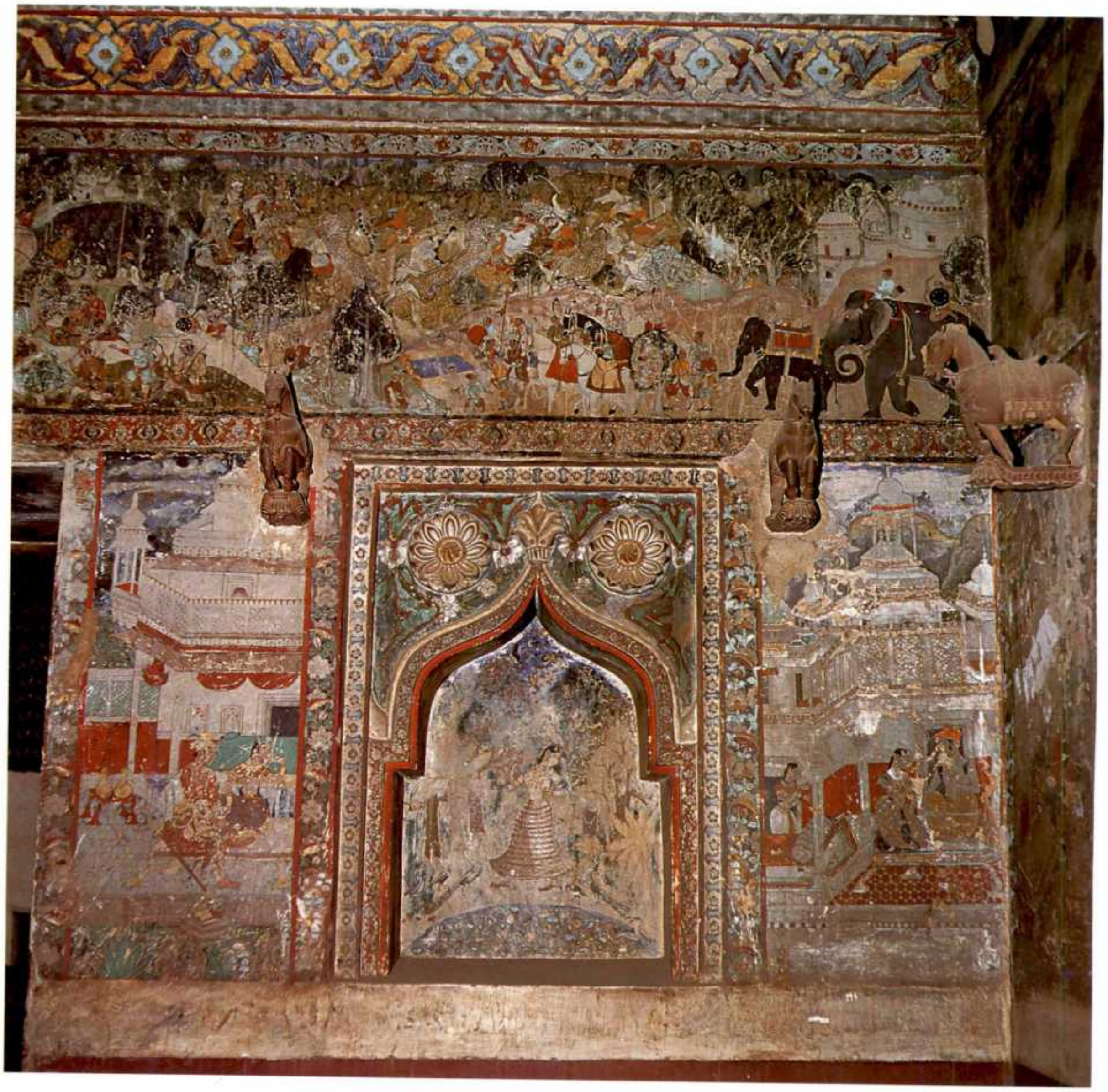
The western interior wall of the Badal Mahal represents, in level D, not only one of the most exciting hunting scenes to be found in seventeenth-century painting from Rajasthan but certainly the most monumental: figure 9 reproduces less than its northern half. The southern half contains in its southern extremity a published portrait of Madho Singh, Rao Ratan's second son, hunting boars from horseback. The northern or right-hand part of



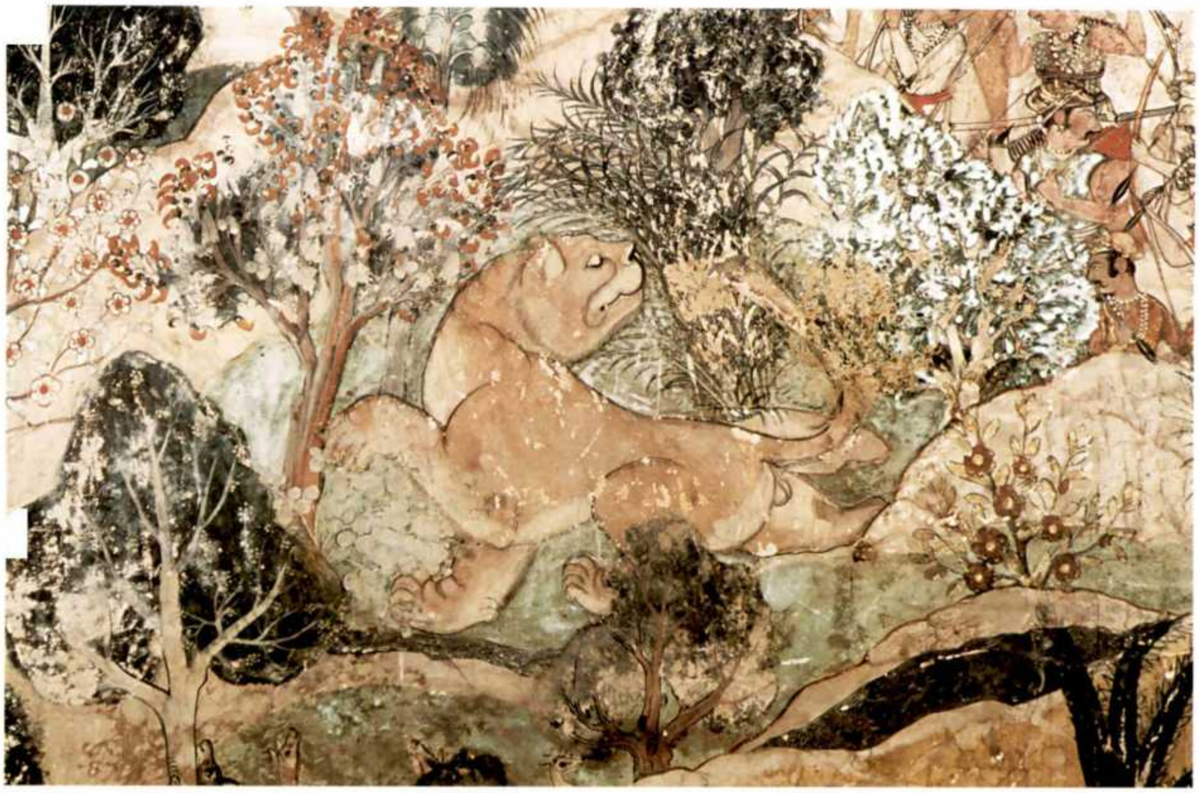
8
Fresco in the northwestern corner, northern wall, of the Badal Mahal, Bundi, representing "farangis" (Europeans), circa 1620–30.
Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

the composition includes the killing of one or more tigers by a number of archers and swordsmen, as also occurs in an often published folio from the *Akbar Nama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (IS 2-1896.17/117). This right half of a double-page composition painted by the artists Basawan and Tara illustrates Akbar's lion hunt at Narwar, which occurred in the summer of 1561. As the V&A *Akbar Nama* is generally dated to circa 1590, it might be surmised that the artist of the mural had seen this or a similar illustrated manuscript executed during Akbar's reign. Figure 10, a detail from the central part of the hunting scene, shows a lion trying to elude the group of beaters which has almost encircled it. Lions of this kind had always been present in Bundi painting and were to become still more famous when some of the court artists migrated south to Kota and founded what was to become the Kota idiom of Bundi painting, until it eventually became stylistically almost independent from its parental Bundi school.

The three paintings below that part of the hunting scene illustrated here by figure 9, level B, depict, from left to right, the *raginis* Ramakari, Gauri, and *raga* Malavakaushika or Malkauns. Compared to the murals in the upper levels, they were painted later and can be dated to the 1640s, especially since they bear certain stylistic affinities to the so-called Kota *Bhagavata* series, datable to the 1630s (Bautze 1987).



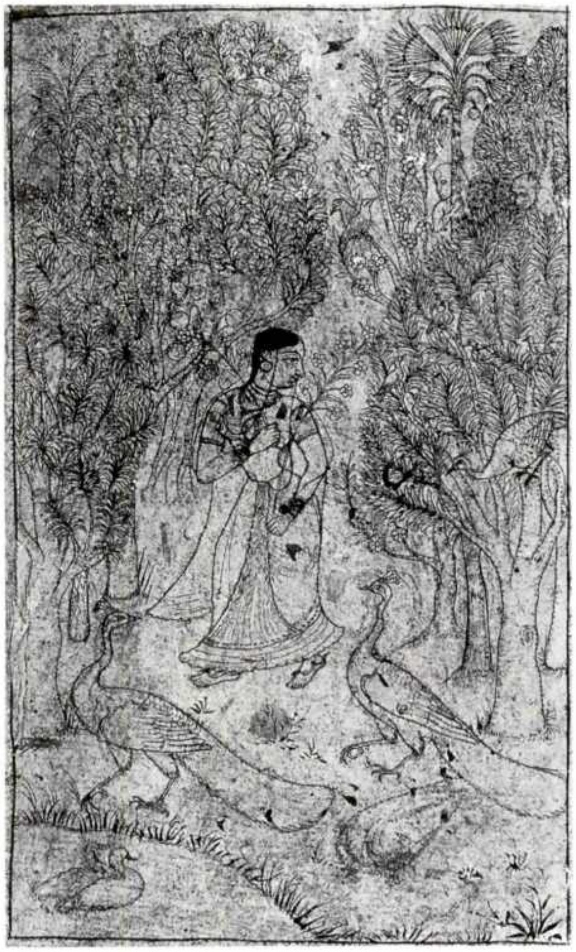
9
Northern third of the western wall in the Badal Mahal, Bundi: Scenes from a hunt and swordsmen and archers killing tiger(s) in level C (top level in this illustration). *Raginis* Ramakari, Gauri, and *raga* Malavakaushika, from left to right, below (level B); circa 1620–30 (level C), circa 1640–50 (level B). *Ragini* Ramakari: 94 x 52 cm; Gauri: 94 x 50 cm; *raga* Malavakaushika: 94.0 x 50.5 cm. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



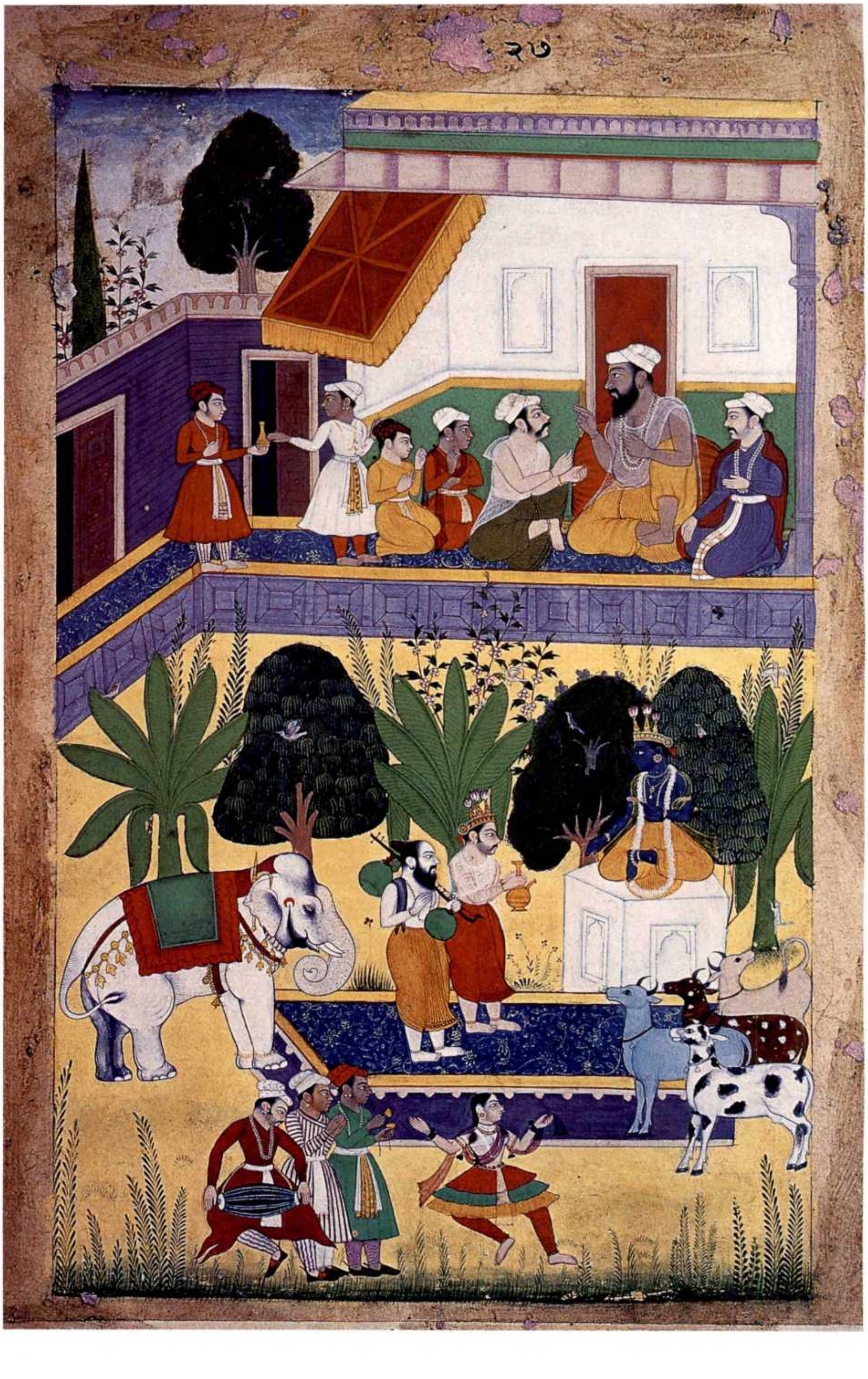
10
Badal Mahal, Bundi, western wall, centre: A lion in the wilderness surrounded by beaters, detail from a hunting scene, circa 1620–30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

Early Seventeenth-Century Bundi Painting on Paper

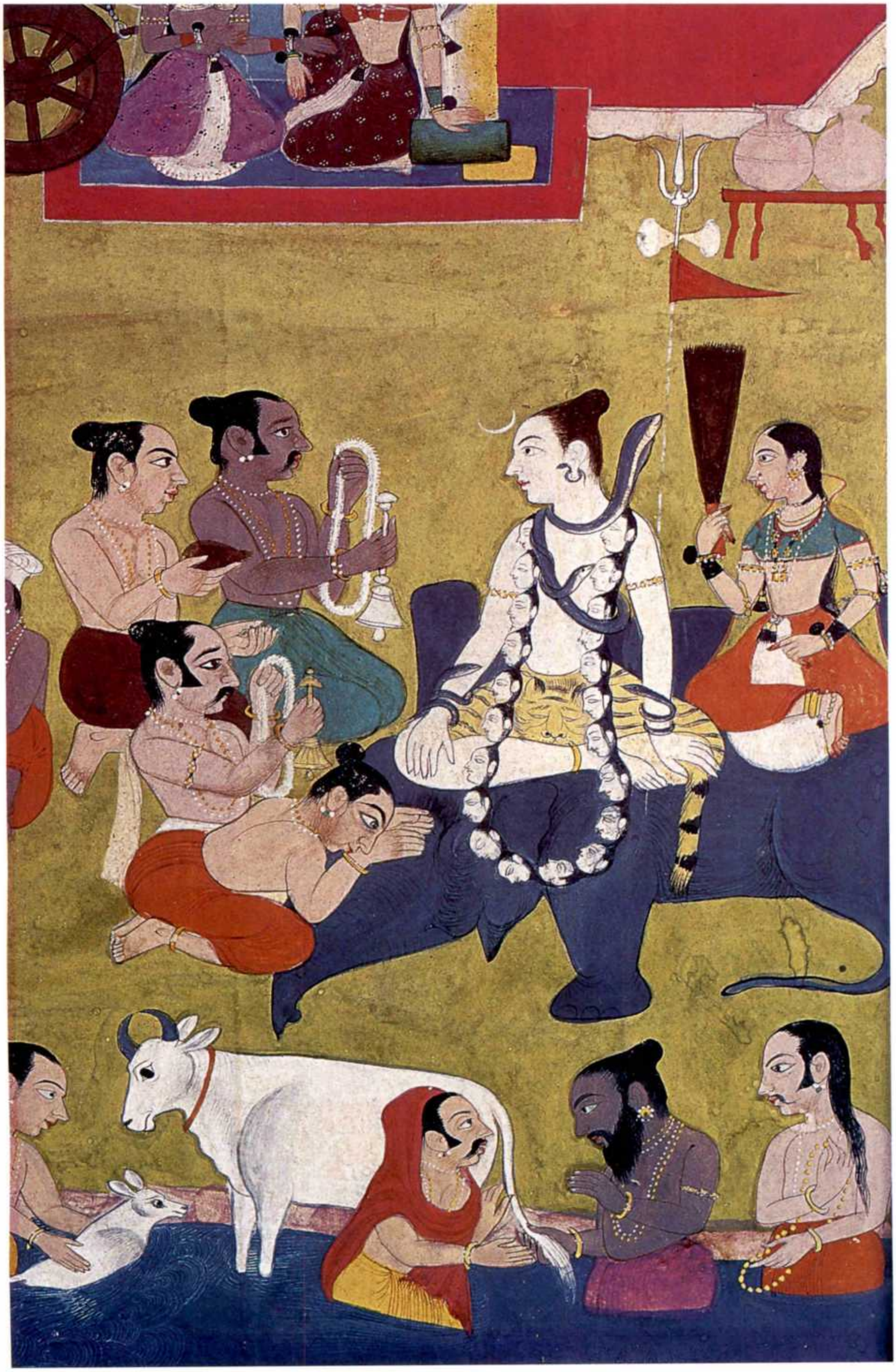
The earliest seventeenth-century Bundi paintings are actually drawings: a *ragamala* in particular, of which a number of examples are in the National Museum, New Delhi, in addition to three formerly in the Pan-Asian collection dispersed in London in 1983. Of the latter group figure 11 illustrates *ragini* Gauri. As this *ragini* is drawn with the greatest precision, it was evidently not intended to be coloured in a later stage of the work; it was to serve as a guideline for future generations of artists. Its details are so minutely drawn that it reminds one more of Mughal than Rajasthani drawings. Compared to more typical Bundi painting, the head of the woman is almost square and betrays strong Mughal influence. The shape of her breasts and her large eyes are reminiscent of early Rajput painting. Monkeys and birds inhabit the foliage of the deciduous trees, the leaves of which are individually drawn. The peacocks here are large-eyed as well; the realistic treatment of their feet,



11
Ragini Gauri. Bundi, circa 1600–20. Ink and watercolour on paper; 18.6 x 11.0 cm. Formerly Pan-Asian collection, now in a private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



12
Krishna being praised by Indra and Narada. *Bhagavata Purana*, Book 10. Bundi, 1630s. Opaque watercolour on paper; 33.0 x 21.6 cm. Government Museum, Kota, no. 1950-27. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



13
Ambika Puja, detail with Shiva being worshipped. *Bhagavata Purana*, Book 10. Bundi, 1630s. Opaque watercolour on paper; 34.3 x 22.2 cm (full painting size). Government Museum, Kota, no. 1950-30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

however, betrays again the skill of an artist trained in an imperial Mughal atelier. The overall effect of the drawing is that of finesse. It hence cannot be dated later than the first or second decade of the seventeenth century. A small number of drawings have survived which are in all probability by the same hand as most of the frescos in levels C, D, and E of the Badal Mahal. These drawings were, however, not available for publication.

Stylistically, the closest comparison with the *ragamala* murals in level B is offered by the Kota *Bhagavata*. Known from several published paintings, the series illustrates incidents from the life of Krishna as narrated in the tenth book of the *Bhagavata Purana.* It got its name from the Government Museum, Kota, which houses forty of its folios (acc. nos. 1950.1-40). Other single folios are in the collection of Vinod Kanoria, Patna, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Victoria and Albert Museum (IS 150-1949). Several paintings from this set are unfinished.

Figure 12 illustrates the 27th chapter from Book 10 of the *Bhagavata Purana:* Krishna had lifted Mount Govardhan and thus saved the inhabitants of Vraj, his village, from a deluge caused by the god Indra. Indra had to acknowledge Krishna's superiority and is shown here, wearing a crown, together with Narada praising an elevated, seated Krishna. Indra's mount, the elephant Airavata, is waiting at a distance behind. Figure 13, a detail of a painting showing the worship of Ambika at the river Sarasvati, introduces the god Shiva shown in full profile with a woman, apparently Ambika, seated next to him. Although the nearest dated comparison is offered by several folios of Book 8 of the *Bhagavata Purana* illustrated by the Mewari artist Sahibdin in 1648, now in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, the Kota *Bhagavata* retains certain traits known from earlier Mughal painting. The turbans are flat and often leave some space at the back of the head making the hair there visible, as in Akbari or early Jahangiri portraits. The *jama* with a four-pointed hem (*chakdar jama*), which was falling out of fashion by Shah Jahan's reign (1628–58), still makes its appearance. The faces, however, are round as in the Badal Mahal *ragamala,* which also shares with the Kota *Bhagavata* the rendering of the landscape in the background. Besides, the parting of the hair is very pronounced in both the Badal Mahal *ragamala* and the Kota *Bhagavata,* as is demonstrated here by the seated woman near Shiva in figure 13. In view of the above mentioned "archaisms", however, it appears difficult to date this set later than the 1630s.

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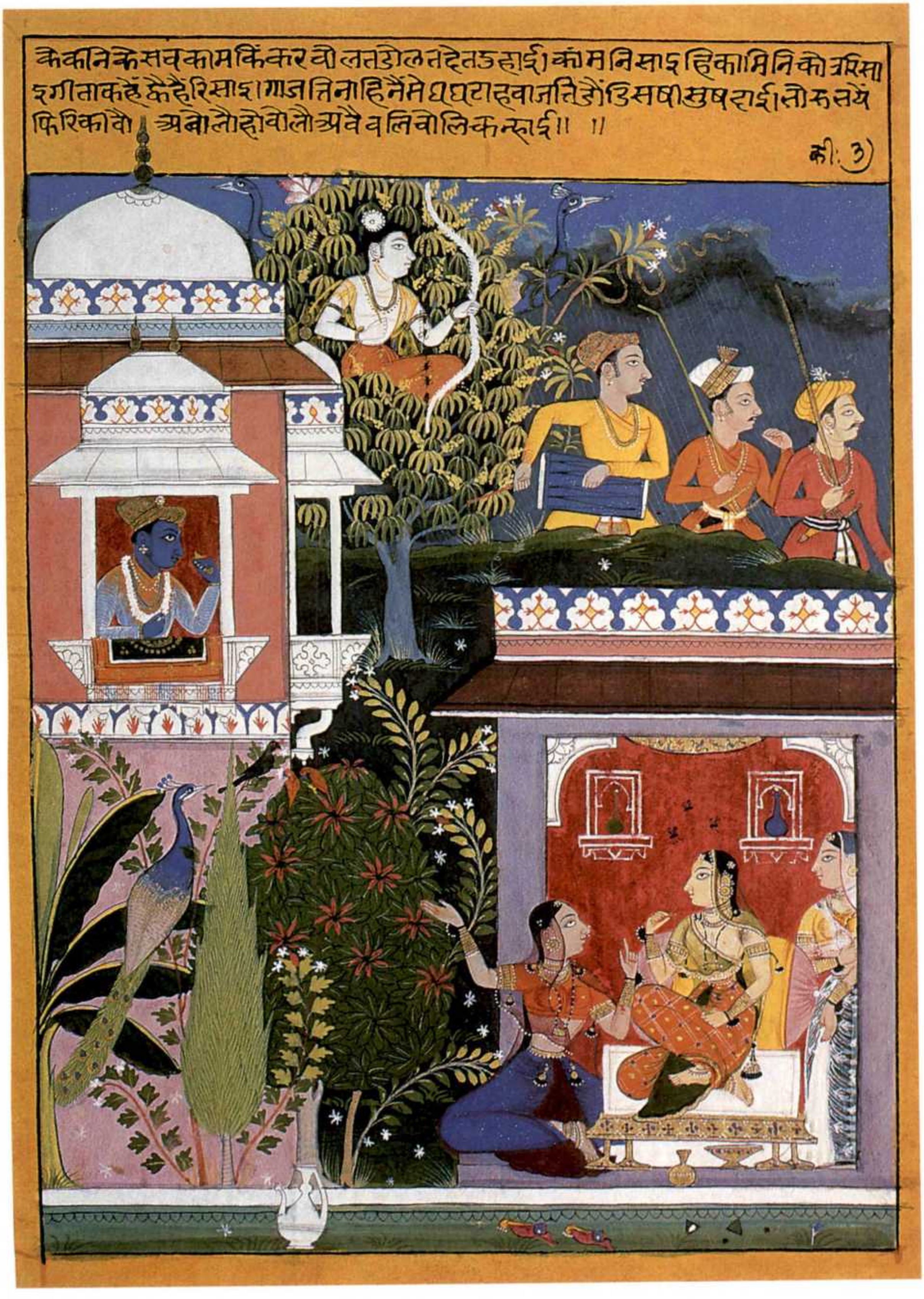
THE SAVING POWER OF SORON: SAHIBDIN OF UDAIPUR AND THE *SUKARAKSHETRA MAHATMYA*

Andrew Topsfield

Sahibdin and Maharana Jagat Singh (1628–52)

The achievement of the painter Sahibdin in developing the classic seventeenth-century style of manuscript illustration at Udaipur has long been known. His first ascribed work, a *ragamala* series, is dated in July 1628, just four months after Maharana Jagat Singh had succeeded his father Karan Singh (r. 1620–28). By this time, the local Mewar idiom of the widespread, sixteenth-century Early Rajput style, seen a generation earlier in the *ragamala* painted by Nasiruddin in 1605 at the temporary capital of Chawand,[1] had fallen out of fashion. In 1615, after long resistance, Maharana Amar Singh had finally accepted Mughal suzerainty and in subsequent years both Prince Karan and his son Jagat attended Emperor Jahangir's court. As a result, from Karan Singh's reign there was a greater, though still modest, access of Mughal influences at Udaipur. These probably included some form of the widespread Popular (or sub-imperial) Mughal painting style, which brought a modified Mughal naturalism and a muted, sometimes muddy palette to typically Rajput subjects such as the *ragamala*. In his own *ragamala*, Sahibdin brilliantly integrated these two disparate styles for the first time at Udaipur, combining the vibrant colouring of Early Rajput painting with an enhanced spatial sense and more versatile figural and compositional conventions acquired in his earlier Popular Mughal training.[2]

Sahibdin's next series of illustrations, the *Gita Govinda* of 1629, reveals an increasingly confident experimentation in his interpretations of Jayadeva's lush and erotically charged poetic imagery, through artfully varied scenes of Krishna and Radha in union or separation in verdant landscape or pavilion settings.[3] His being a Muslim (like Nasiruddin before him) was never a hindrance to Sahibdin's sympathetic evocation of Hindu devotional or mythological themes. In the early 1630s he went on to paint an extensive series of the *Rasikapriya* of Kesav Das, a Hindi treatise on the typology of idealized lovers (*nayakas* and *nayikas*).[4] Here he shows his mastery as an interpreter of poetical texts. Kesav's elaborate classification of lovers and their emotional transactions – and particularly his expressive visual imagery, drawn from nature and from human life – would no doubt have been expounded to Sahibdin by the court librarian or pandit in charge of manuscript production. The two men evidently had a good understanding, for the system generally worked well. Sahibdin, on his more inspired days, would seize on the salient visual images arising from the poetry and recombine them inventively in well-balanced compositional schemes of his own. This literal-minded but



1
The confidante urges the *nayika* to join her lover. Illustration to the *Rasikapriya* of Kesav Das. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, circa 1630–35. Gouache on paper. Government Museum, Udaipur. Photograph: A. Topsfield.

often elegant mode of adaptation is seen in an illustration to *Rasikapriya* X.22 (figure 1). The companion of the *nayika* exhorts her to forget her pride and go to her lover (or Krishna, seen at a balcony). In accordance with Kesav's verses, she points to the peacocks, whose plaintive cries in the rainy season make them the servants of the love-god Kama (shown, with his bow, in a tree), and to the thunder-clouds, resounding like "drums of pleasure" (personified as a human drummer). Sahibdin skilfully interposes trees and shrubs between the palace and pavilion, otherwise hardly separated within the compact vertical format which he favoured in his early period. The building on the left recalls contemporary architecture at Udaipur, such as the Gul Mahal, the pleasure palace on Jagmandir island which was completed by Jagat Singh around 1630.

By the mid-1640s, with advancing years, Jagat Singh had begun to put youthful delights behind him and to turn increasingly to religious devotion and charitable works.[5] In 1647 he went on an extensive pilgrimage tour during which he performed several *tuladan* ceremonies, acts of charity in which he was weighed against gold or silver. These auspicious occasions were commemorated in the stone *tulastambha* monuments outside the Bari Pol gateway of the City Palace. In his last years he built the imposing Jagdish temple on Udaipur's main street. His later manuscript commissions for the royal library also show a growing piety, both religious and to a large extent ancestral, since the Maharanas were themselves regarded as descendants of both Rama and the Sun-god Surya. In 1645 Sahibdin and his assistants completed a series of the *Suryavamsaprakasha*, chronicling the solar dynasty of the Sisodia rulers of Mewar.[6] But he was clearly uninspired by this bald dynastic record. Its sparse, repetitive compositions sprawl weakly in the wide, horizontal manuscript format which had now been adopted. More successful was the lengthy *Bhagavata Purana* series of 1648.[7] Its surviving illustrations vary both in format and compositional skill, but include two spirited full-page landscape scenes by Sahibdin, depicting the Trikuta mountain and the temptation of Markandeya.[8]

The final and greatest commission of Jagat Singh's reign was a uniquely ambitious manuscript of the *Ramayana*, originally with some 450 illustrations, executed in the years 1649–53.[9] Sahibdin worked on only two of its seven books, the *Ayodhyakanda* of 1650 and the *Yuddhakanda* of 1652. This concentration of his efforts helped to produce the best work of his later career, showing a greater mastery than ever of multi-episodic continuous narration and of densely peopled landscape, palace, or battle scenes within the horizontal format, above all in the *Yuddhakanda* section. In this "Book of Battles" Rama and his allies defeat Ravana and he returns at last with Sita to Ayodhya.[10] When Jagat Singh received this magnificent book in August 1652, only weeks before his death, it must surely have gladdened him to see the climactic restoration of his legendary ancestor to the throne, through the inspired work of his favourite artist.

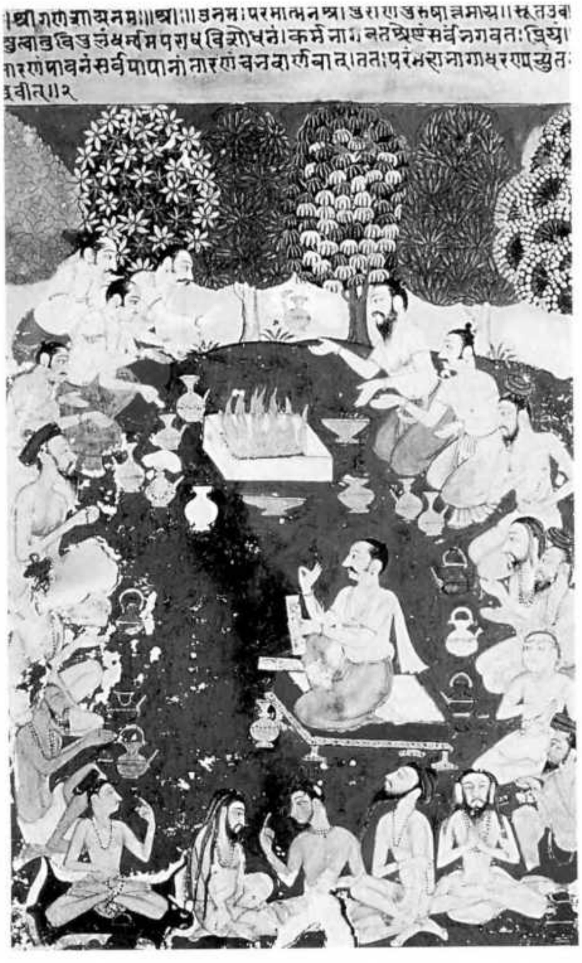
Maharana Raj Singh, Soron, and the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*

In October 1652 Jagat Singh was succeeded by the twenty-three-year-old Raj Singh. For the first year or more of his reign, many of the local and imported artists who had been recruited for the great *Ramayana* series were still finishing off its remaining books. But Sahibdin had no further hand in the project. His first and perhaps his only commission from Raj Singh – for it is his last known work – was of a different and unusual kind. It is a series of twenty-six illustrations to the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, a Sanskrit *tirthamahatmya* text, forming part of the *Varaha*

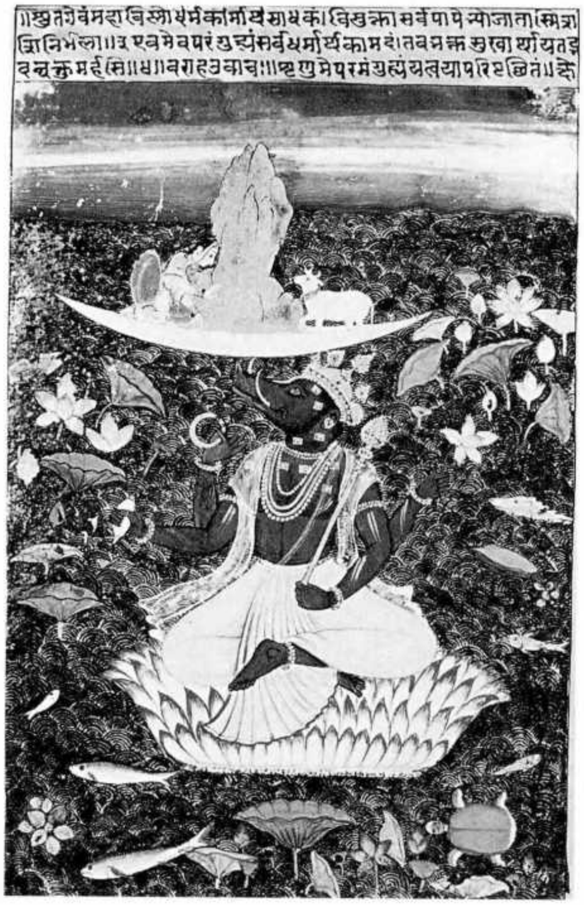
Purana.[11] It celebrates the sanctifying virtues of the pilgrimage town of Sukara, the modern Soron, lying on the Ganga east of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. This *tirtha* is sacred to Varaha, the boar incarnation of Vishnu, who slew the demon Hiranyaksha there.[12] In 1876 Atkinson noted in his Gazetteer: "Devout Hindus from all parts of India, after visiting Muttra, come to Soron to bathe in the Burhganga, or old stream of the Ganges, which here forms a considerable pool, with temples and ghats on the eastern and northern sides...."[13] He mentions eighteen "well kept" ghats, fifty or sixty temples with many pipal trees around them, and thirty large dharamsalas (rest-houses). More than half the local Hindus were Brahmins, "a fine race of handsome men distinguished by the wearing of a scarlet *pagri*. They are very well-to-do and derive a large income from donations sent to them from all parts of northern India.... They realise large contributions at the various festivals that take place during the year."

In 1648 the young Prince Raj Singh had visited Soron during a pilgrimage tour to Mathura, Gokula, Prayag, Kashi and other centres, in the company of his grandmother Jambuvati and the princess Nand Kumari, daughter of Maharaja Karan Singh of Bikaner.[14] At that time the main Ganga river still flowed through Soron, for it only changed its bed later in the seventeenth century.[15] A *tuladan* ceremony was held in which the prince was weighed against gold and the royal ladies against silver. The local brahmins no doubt regaled them with popular stories about the holy *tirthas*, as recorded in their *Mahatmya*, and these miraculous tales evidently made a lasting impression. It may well have been to commemorate this pilgrimage, and perhaps to please the female relatives who had accompanied him, that Raj Singh now commissioned illustrations to this auspicious text from his leading artist. The colophon of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*[16] (figure 15) is dated on the tenth (Vijayadashami) of the bright half of Ashvin (i.e. at the Dasahra festival, one of the major occasions in the Mewar court calendar, when gifts were presented[17]), in VS 1712 or October 1655, in the autumn season, in the reign of Maharana Raj Singh. It is said to have been written at the command of Sri Divanji (the Maharana in his role as Divan or minister to Shiva Eklingji, the tutelary deity of Mewar); the librarian Vyasa Jayadeva commissioned it, the scribe Hirananda wrote the text, and Sahibdin made the paintings. Its pages are numbered 1–26 near the lower right corner of the red border; a later, coarser hand repeats the numbering in the upper border, with the additional title *bara puran* (i.e. *Varaha Purana*).

The first page of the series sets the scene of the Puranic frame story. The narrator of the *Varaha Purana* sits reciting on a low *gaddi* (figure 2). A circle of long-haired rishis and

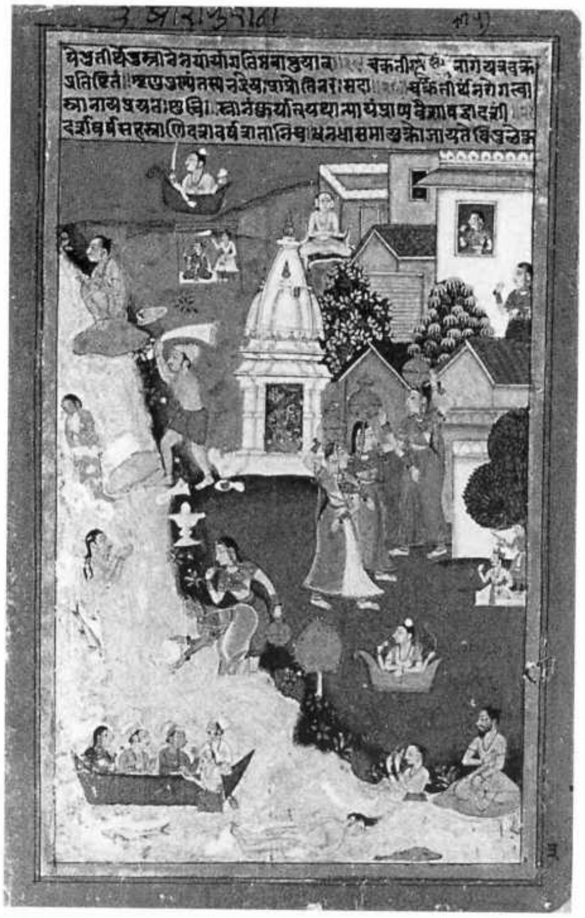


2
Recitation of the *Varaha Purana* to rishis and brahmins. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 1. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.



3
The Boar-god Varaha discourses to the Earth-goddess. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 2(?). By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.

brahmins tending a sacred fire surround him, in a grove indicated by a row of Sahibdin's conventional trees. The circular grouping of the audience makes for a simplified composition, but the attitudes of the rishis near the foreground are sufficiently varied (one is shown frontally, in full face) to avoid monotony. The next page introduces the deity Varaha (figure 3), whose discourse to the Earth-goddess forms the substance of the *Purana* (and of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*). Seated on a lotus amid the primordial waters and holding the attributes of Vishnu, he bears the Earth-goddess aloft on his tusk and tells her of the sacred *tirtha*s which are dear to him. Soron (*Saukaraka*), he says, is a great *tirtha*, a "liberator from worldly bondage". Sahibdin's iconic image is an impressive one. The commanding figure of the Boar-god stands out against the ocean and its abundant lotuses, fish, turtle, and makara, which are set prominently in a billowing ground of old-fashioned, fish-scale wave forms.



4
Pilgrims at the Chakratirtha at Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 3. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

Among the holy spots at Soron that Varaha mentions is the Chakratirtha, where the Wheel of Vishnu is installed (figure 4). The pilgrim who bathes there at the auspicious time will be reborn in a rich family of high social status and "will live for ten thousand and ten hundred years". Sahibdin's lively illustration of a riverside ghat may be based more on scenes by the Pichola lake at Udaipur, for it seems unlikely that he had seen Soron for himself. Pilgrims bathe in the flowing Ganga, women fetch water, a dhobi beats his washing on a rock. Yogis meditate and celestial *deva* figures in sky-boats appear. Noblemen seen in a boat and (in diminutive size) on the shore are perhaps visiting princely pilgrims like Raj Singh and his party.

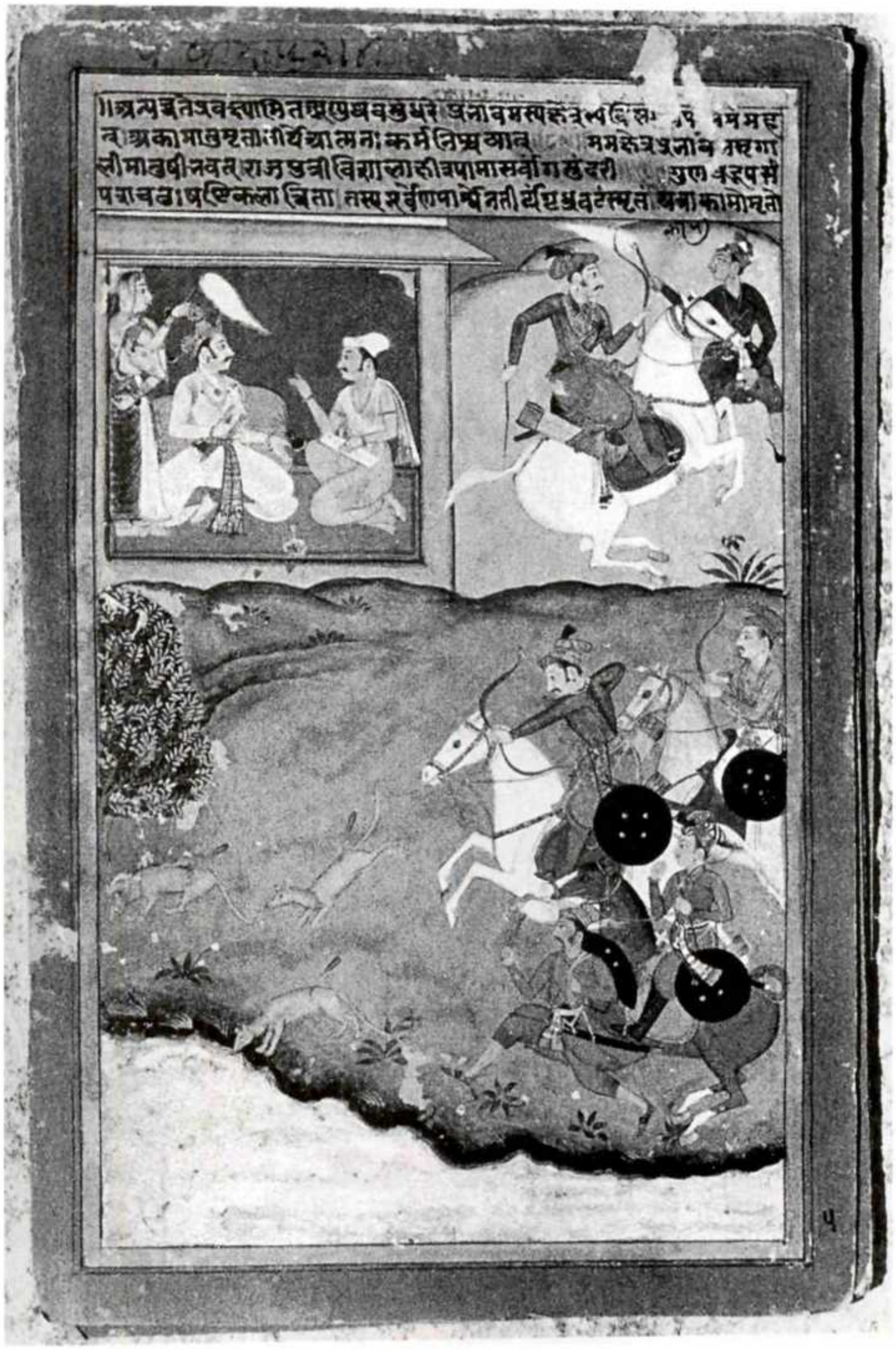
The *Mahatmya* then tells two stories of the saving powers of Soron. These are briefly summarized here, with a commentary on Sahibdin's versions of them.

The story of the she-jackal and the vulture

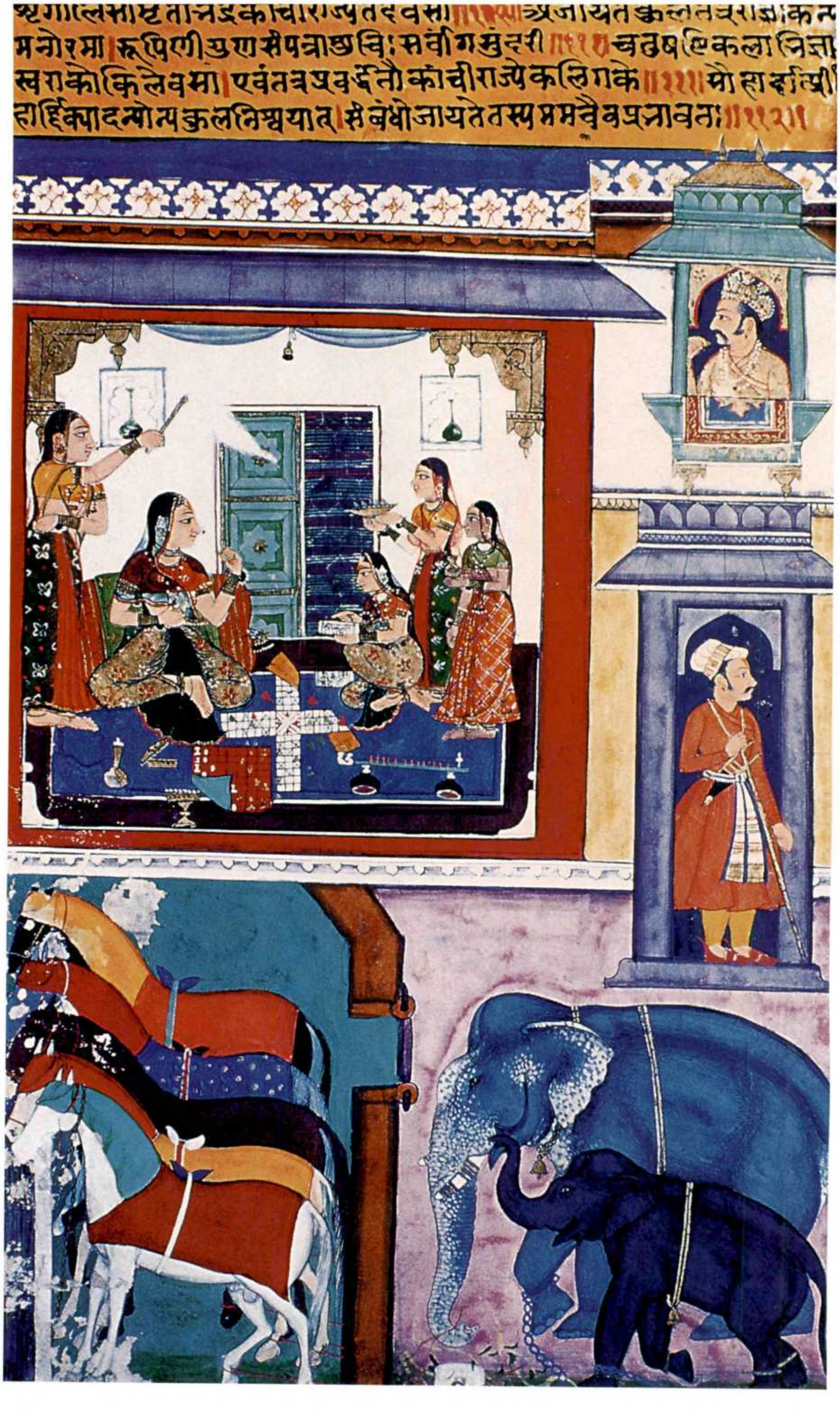
One day a she-jackal was shot and killed by Prince Somadatta, while hunting at the place called Somatirtha (figure 5). Here and in subsequent pages Sahibdin makes use of continuous narration, often dividing the composition either informally or more explicitly into two vertical registers. Above, Somadatta sets forth on his rearing horse to hunt; this figure recalls a contemporary hunting portrait, possibly of Raj Singh, in Sahibdin's style.[18] Below, the prince pursues and kills the she-jackal (seen thrice), beside the Ganga. *Because of her past good deeds and the virtues of this holy spot, the slain she-jackal was reborn as the beautiful princess of Kanti, "endowed with long eyes, pure and lovely in every limb, fair, virtuous, and well-versed in the sixty-four arts"* (figure 6). In this subsequent illustration, Sahibdin shows the princess and her maids in a conventional chamber within her father's palace: chess and *chaupar* games and a vina lie before her, as signs of her accomplishments. The king appears at a *jharokha* window, much like the regular balcony appearances of the Maharanas at Udaipur.

Meanwhile, at another holy place called Gridhravata, which was a banyan tree frequented by vultures, a vulture was also shot by Prince Somadatta while hunting and was in turn reborn as the virtuous prince of Kalinga (figure 7). Again in continuous narration, Somadatta aims an arrow at the bird in the banyan, which is retrieved by two shikaris on the right. This not very vulture-like bird then ends up, pathetically, in the river, while parakeets and other birds wing freely in the sky. Below, the hunters head for home. Because of the constraints of the vertical format, the undulating Ganga flows under the truncated hindlegs of the rear horse.

In the fullness of time, because of the friendship between the two kingdoms, the prince of Kalinga and the princess of Kanti were married, and the couple then returned to Kalinga (figure 8). In the upper register Sahibdin sets a conventional scene of the royal wedding under a ceremonial pandal in a palace courtyard. Below, the bridegroom on a white horse and the bride in a purdah palanquin set off with their escort; the *palki*-bearers have hats of a European style. *A true love then grew between the happy couple and "they enjoyed themselves in pleasure grounds, in shrines of deities, and in the forests and gardens..."* (figure 9). Sahibdin shows their life together in

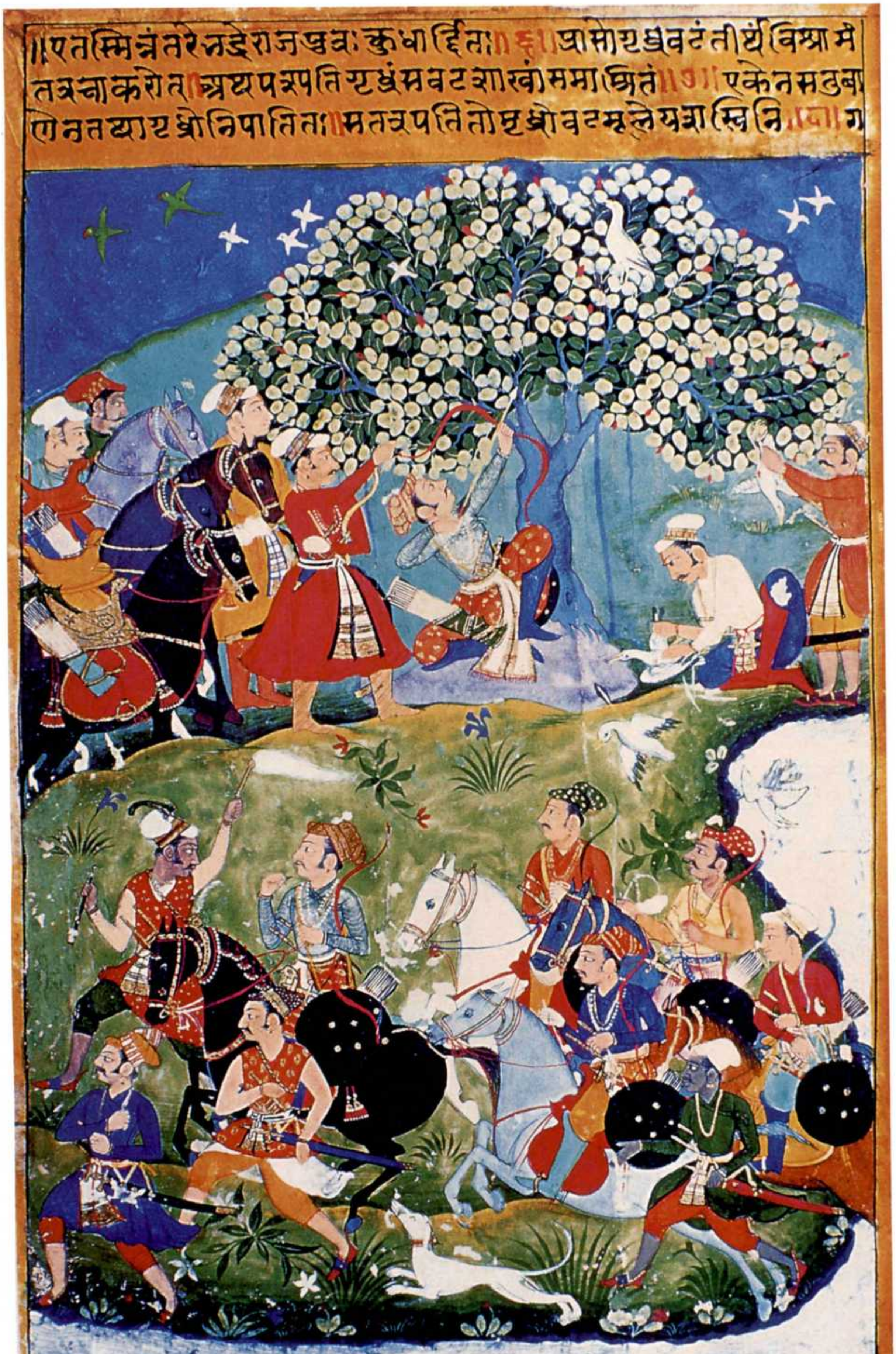


5
Prince Somadatta kills the she-jackal while hunting. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 5. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

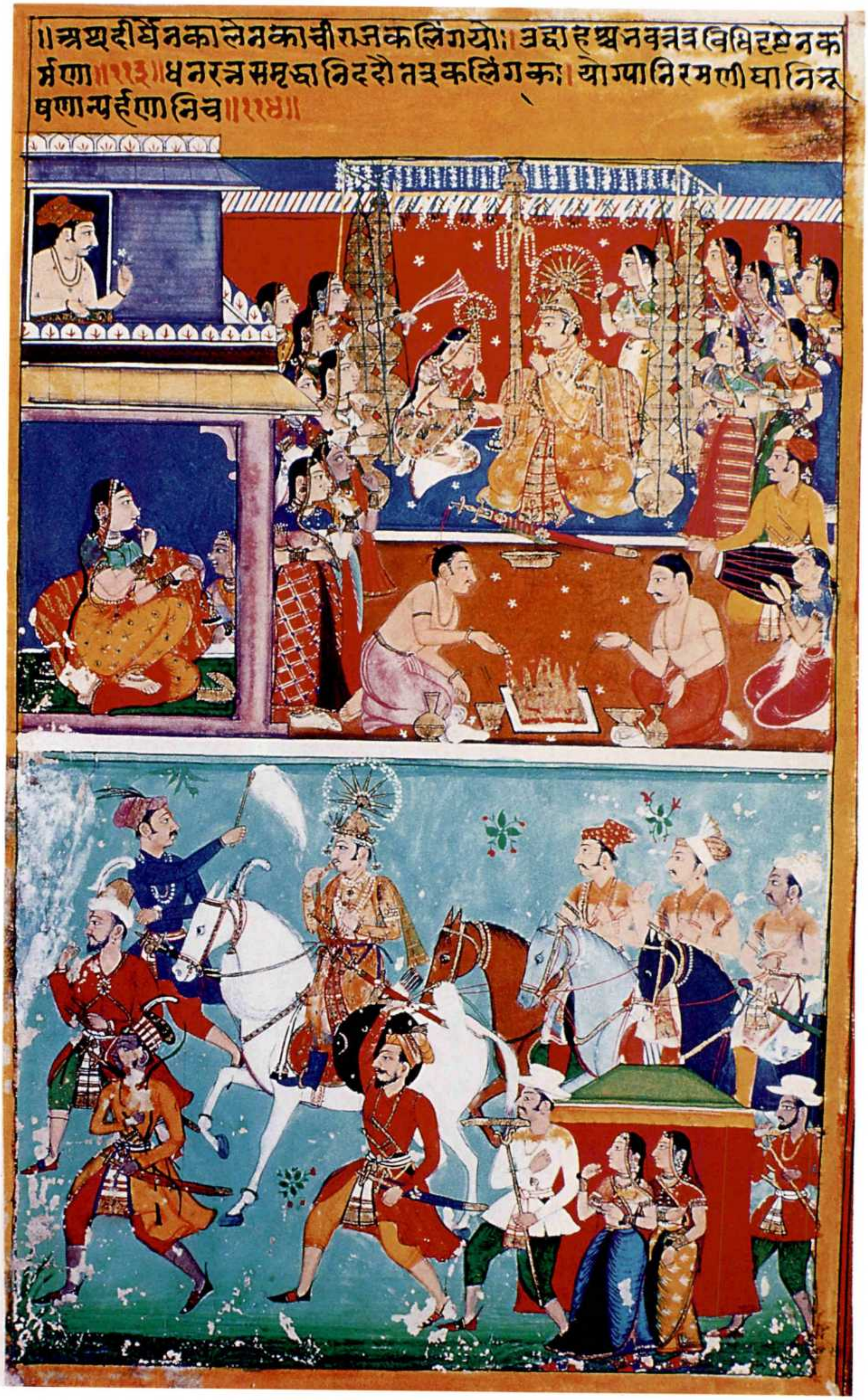


6

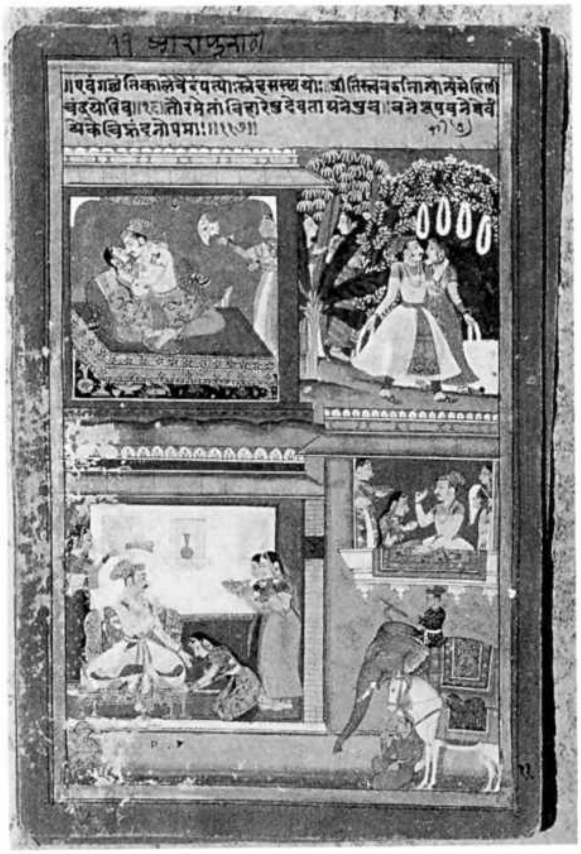
The accomplished princess of Kanti, in her father's palace. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 8(?). By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.


॥एतस्मिन्नंतरे नृदेराजपुत्रः क्षुधार्दितः॥६॥ आसाद्य वटं तीर्थे विश्रामं
तत्र चाकरोत्॥ अथ पत्रपतिगृध्रं स वटशाखां समाश्रितं॥७॥ एकेन सत्तुबा
णेन तत्याग गृध्रो निपातितः॥ स तत्र पतितो गृध्रो वटमूले यथा स्थिति॥८॥ ग

7
Prince Somadatta shoots the vulture in the banyan while hunting. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 6(?). By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.


॥अथ दीर्घेन कालेन काचीराज कलिंगयोः॥ उद्वाहश्च नवृत्तश्च विधिदृष्टेन क
र्मणा॥११३॥ धनरत्न समृद्धानि ददौ तत्र कलिंगकः। योग्यानि रमणीयानि भू
षणान्याहरणानि च॥११४॥

8
The marriage of the princess of Kanti and the prince of Kalinga. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 9. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.



9
The married life of the prince and princess at Kalinga. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 11. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

four conventional scenes, deriving partly from the "love in union" subjects of his *Rasikapriya* days. The couple embrace in a bed-chamber, then promenade with garlands to a forest bower; below, the respectful wife attends her husband in a public chamber and at a palace balcony.

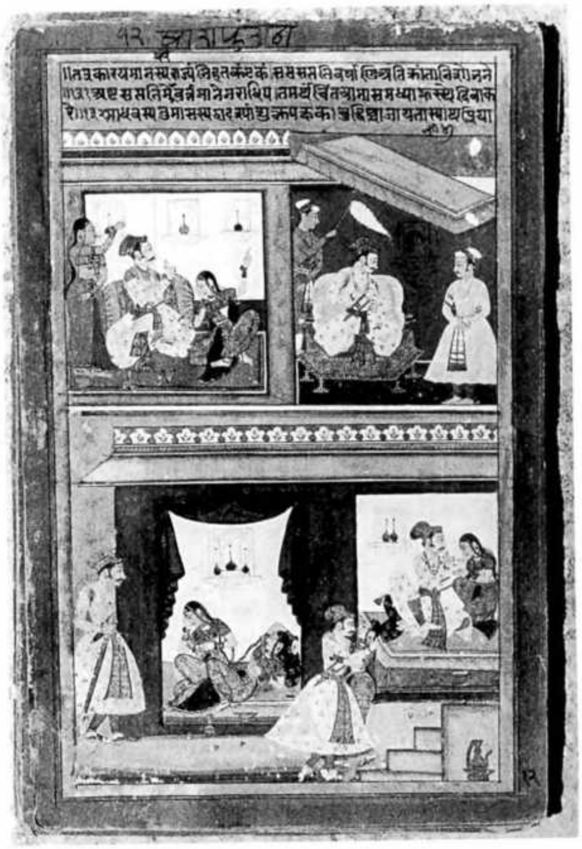
One day, however, the princess made an unusual and unexplained request. She asked that every day at noon she should be allowed to retire for a time into a secluded chamber and be seen by no one. The prince consented to this, and so the years went by. They had children, and in time the prince became King of Kalinga. But one day, his curiosity finally impelled him to break his promise and to seek out his wife in her mysterious daily retreat. He found her there prostrate with a grievous headache. She then promised to explain all to him, if he would renounce the throne to his son and retire with her to Soron (figure 10). In five consecutive scenes Sahibdin shows the prince agreeing to his wife's request for seclusion, later deliberating about it, and finally entering her draped chamber, where she is at first shown doubly, lying in solitary pain and sitting up to receive him.

The royal party accordingly set off for Soron with elephants and horses, making camp along the way. Arriving at the holy city, the royal couple venerated Varaha (figure 11). Sahibdin, in his literal fashion, shows these three phases of the journey consecutively. *Finally, the princess told her secret: she was once the she-jackal slain at this spot, and it was the pain of the king's arrow, still lodged in her head, that had troubled her daily. The prince revealed that he too was the vulture slain at Soron. So they remained there in devotion for the rest of their days and attained a heavenly rebirth.*

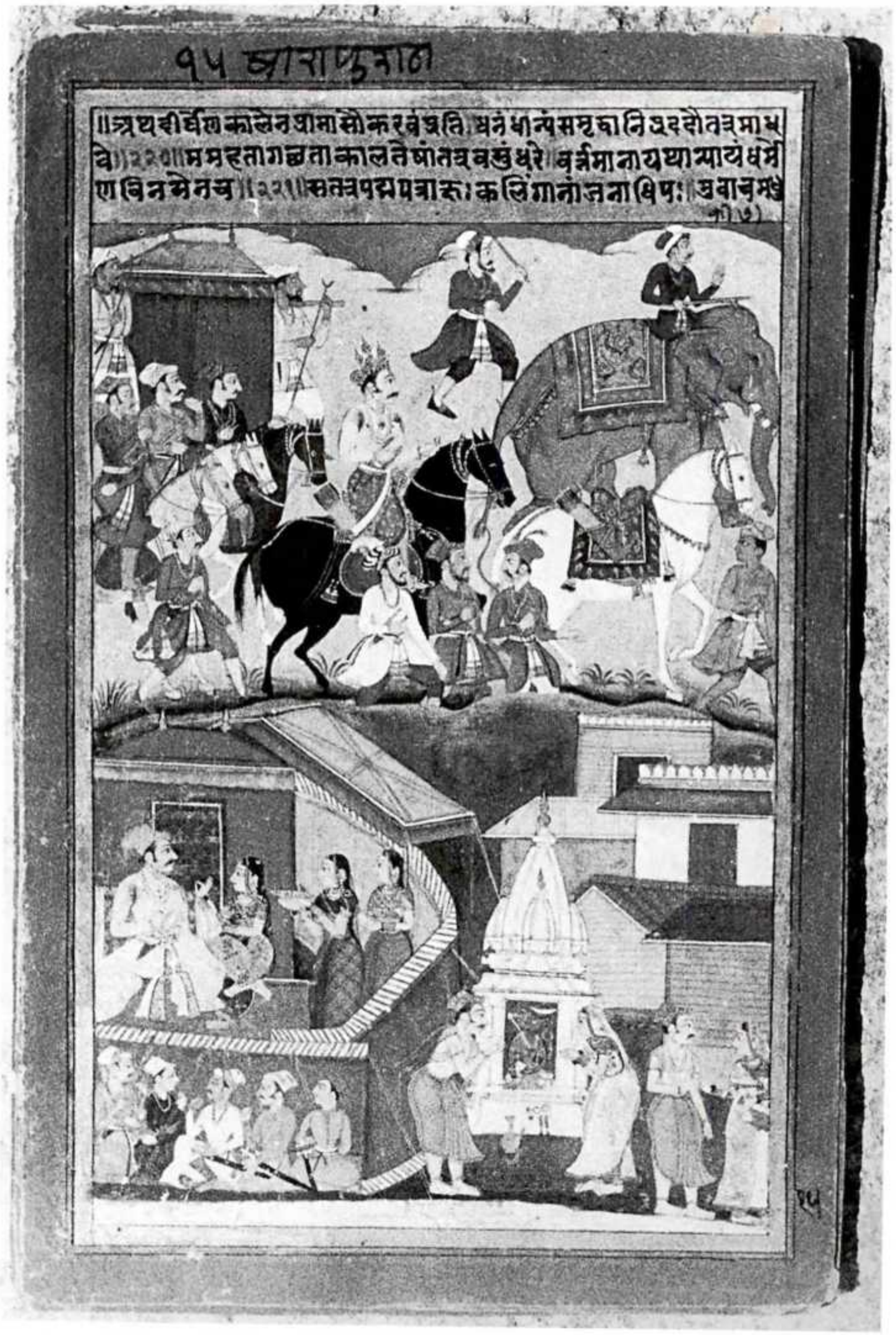
The story of the wagtail

Varaha then recounts a further tale of Soron's sanctity.

A wagtail, living on a diet of insects, died one day of indigestion. Its corpse became the plaything of thoughtless boys, who threw it into



10
The king of Kalinga visits his wife in her secluded chamber. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 12. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.



11
The royal couple travel to Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 15. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

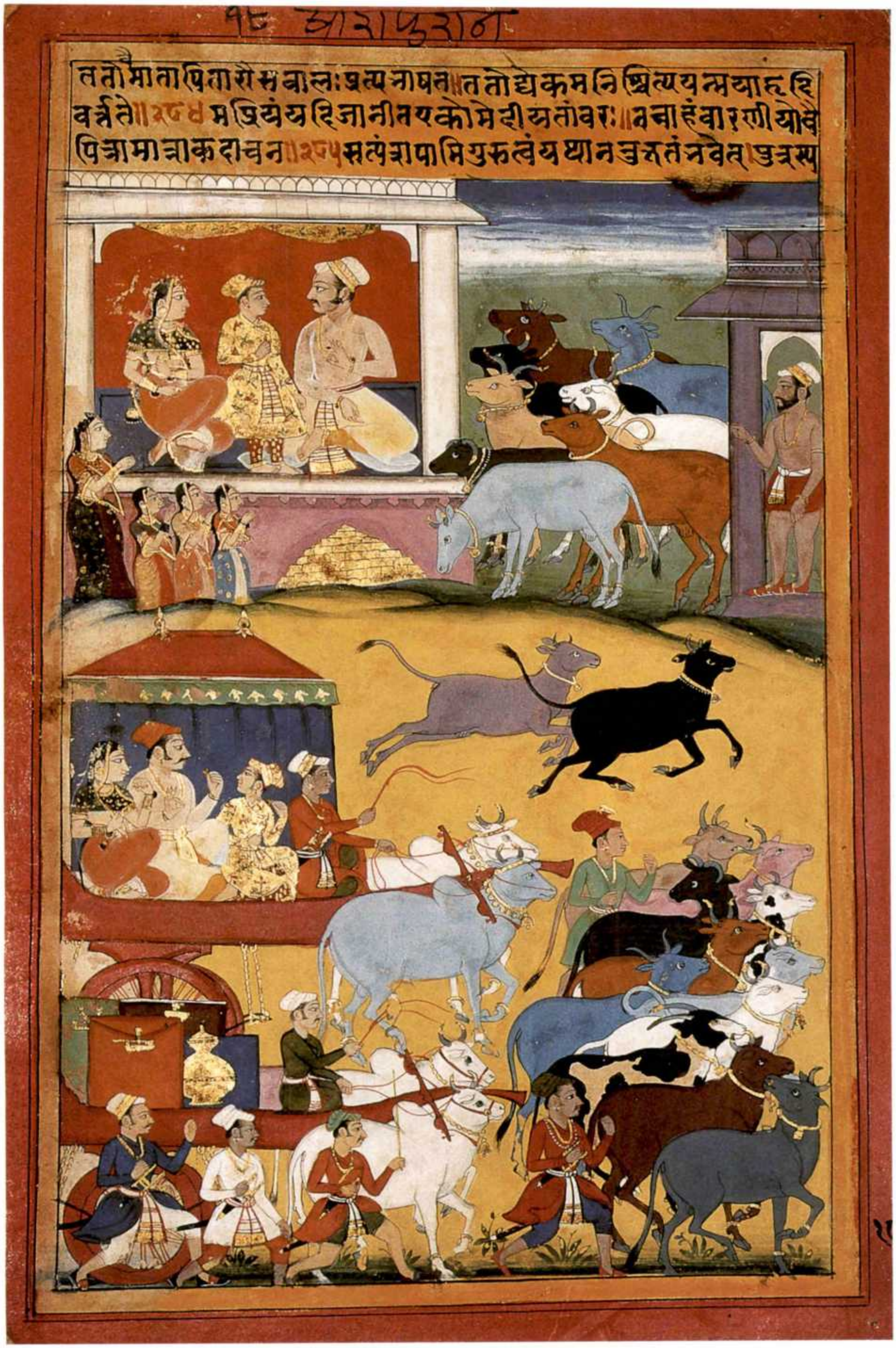
the Ganga at the holy place called Adityatirtha. As a result of this immersion, the bird was reborn as the handsome and devout son of a rich merchant family. When the boy reached the age of twelve, he told his parents of his intention to retire to Soron and worship Vishnu there. They protested, offering him instead their wealth, including 30,000 cows, to give away in charity. But the boy would not be deterred, and at last the family set off for Soron, preceded by their cows, to be offered there (figure 12). Sahibdin's painting first shows the pious youth, dressed in a princely flowered gold *jama*, addressing his bewildered parents, and below, their departure with a herd of cows and bullock-carts laden with wealth. *Arriving at the holy city, the family dispensed their cows and riches in charity to the priests.* This is shown in the foreground of Sahibdin's picture (figure 13). Above, there is an interlude in the manner of his *Rasikapriya* work, for the text relates that *it was the rainy season, in which the thunder and lightning of monsoon clouds, the fragrance of blossoming flowers, and the cries of peacocks brought pain to women separated from their lovers.* With something of his old deftness (compare figure 1), Sahibdin incorporates these conventional images of the rains into his background, with the love-god Kama aiming his flower arrow from a tree behind the central Varaha temple.

The story ends predictably. *The boy told his parents of his past life as the wagtail that had died at Soron, and he and his parents remained there in the worship of Vishnu, until they attained a heavenly rebirth.*

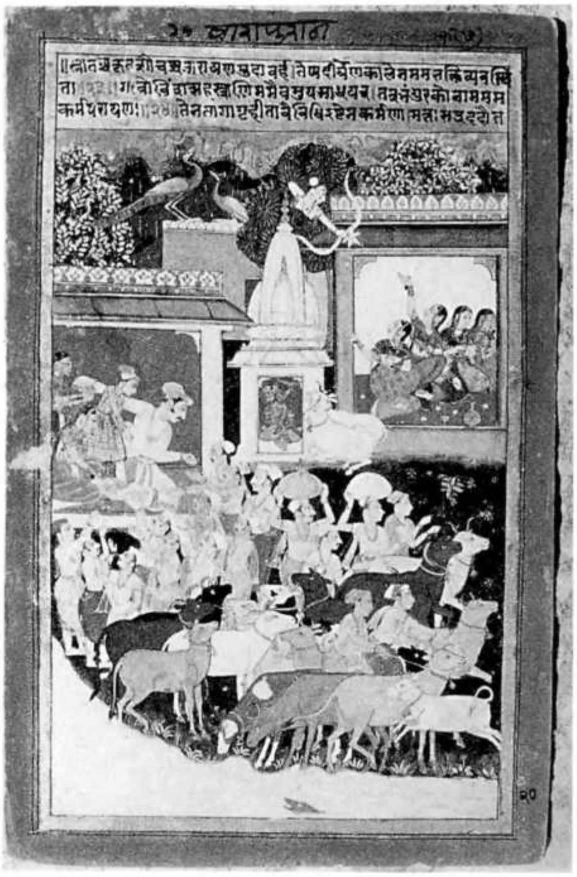
Conclusion: Sahibdin and His Successors

The subjects of the last few pages of the series remain uncertain.[19] The final page (figure 14) is another view of a riverside *tirtha*, with the Ganga flowing down the left side and along the bottom of the picture (as in figure 4). A Varaha temple appears, and bathing pilgrims and priests, who are perhaps being offered the elephant, horse, and cows in charity. The accompanying text (continuing on the reverse, with colophon: figure 15) is not found in the published *Varaha Purana* and may belong to a different recension.

After completing the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya* for the Dasahra festival of 1655, Sahibdin presumably went into retirement or died, so ending a distinguished career of almost thirty years. It is not altogether surprising that



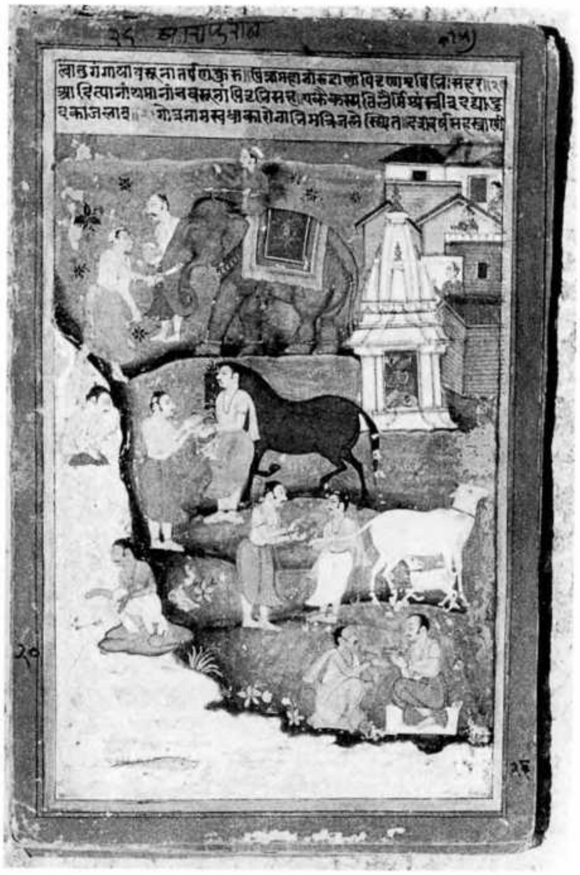
12
The merchant couple and their young son set out for Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 18. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Birla collection, Calcutta.



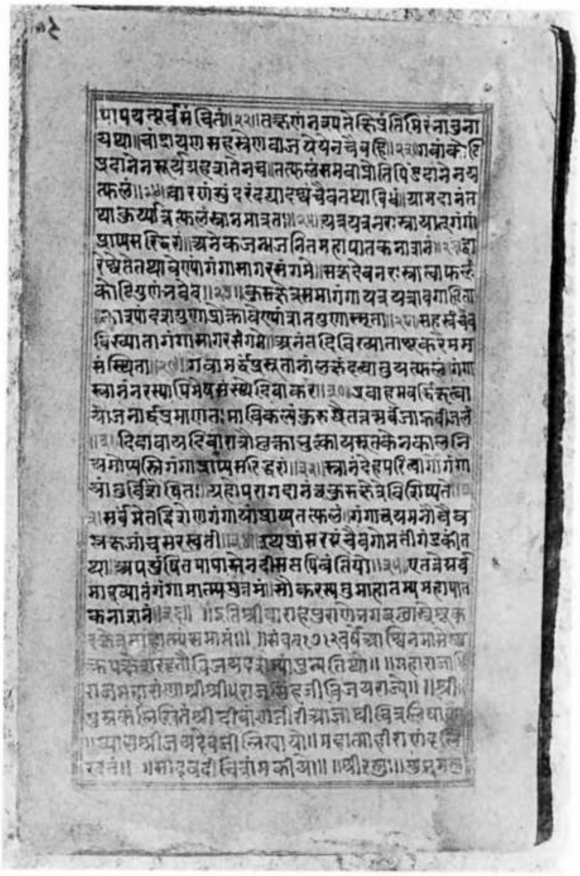
13
The merchant family dispenses charity at Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 20. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

the edifying tales of the *Mahatmya* elicited from him neither the poetical flair of his early days, nor the compositional mastery and dramatic tension of his *Ramayana* work. Even so, his powers had by no means waned. His interpretation of the narrative is always sympathetic. His compositions, full-page or double-registered, convey the action fluently and often with animation. They show him recombining and elaborating his stock of imagery in a new synthesis, within a notably taller vertical format than in his early period. Sahibdin's technical range was never vast, but like all of the outstanding court artists of Mewar at different periods, he knew how to make the most of it.

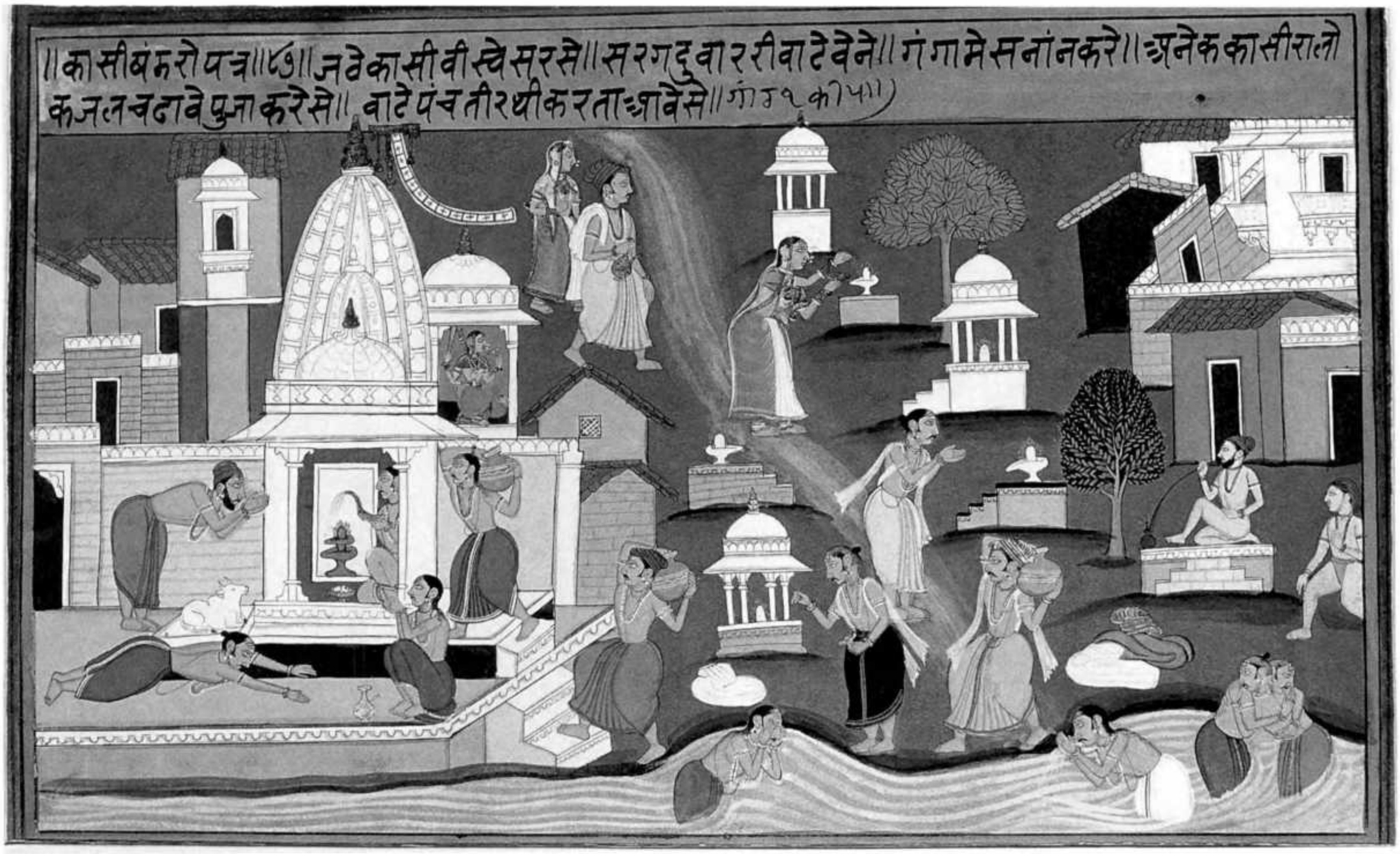
Sahibdin's style became the principal model for Udaipur manuscript illustration for the rest of the seventeenth century and beyond. But none of his successors came near to approaching his imagination and facility. In the later Raj Singh and Jai Singh periods (circa



14
Pilgrims and priests at a riverside *tirtha*. Final page (fol. 26) of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.



15
Reverse of folio in figure 14, with text and colophon. Photograph: W.G. Archer.


॥कासीखंडरोपत्र॥९७॥जठेकासीवीस्वेसरसे॥सरगदुवाररीवाटेवेने॥गंगामेसनांनकरे॥अनेककासीरालो
कजलचढावेपुजाकरेसे॥ वाटेपंचतीरथीकरताआवेसे॥गंगा१की५॥)

16
The Vishveshvara temple and ghats at Kashi (Banaras). From a series of the *Kashi Khanda*, fol. 97. Udaipur, circa 1690. Gouache on paper. Government Museum, Udaipur. Photograph: A. Topsfield.

1675–95) a massive programme of manuscript illustration was undertaken which eventually debased the conventions developed by Sahibdin. Among the diverse texts illustrated in this period were one or two more *tirthamahatmya* series. A page from the *Kashi Khanda*, a section of the *Skanda Purana* praising the holy sites at Banaras, once again depicts a temple and ghats (figure 16). But here the subject has become a simple assemblage of stock elements: the *linga* shrines, priests, sadhus, and pilgrims standing in a now streaky and formulaic Ganga.

NOTES

1. Often published: e.g. G.K. Kanoria, "An early dated Rajasthani ragamala", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIX, 1952–53; K. Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, 1973, p. 159.
2. E.g. K. Khandalavala, M. Chandra, and P. Chandra, *Miniature Paintings from the Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection*, New Delhi, 1960, nos. 23a-i, pl. C, figs. 29-30; D. Barrett and B. Gray, *Painting of India*, Lausanne, 1963, pp. 135-37.
3. A. Topsfield, "Sahibdin's *Gita-Govinda* illustrations", *Chhavi-2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume*, ed. A. Krishna, Benares, 1981, pp. 231-38.
4. At least two similar *Rasikapriya* series were painted by Sahibdin (and by an assistant, in some pages of the series in the Government Museum, Udaipur): A. Topsfield, "Sahibdin's illustrations to the *Rasikapriya*", *Orientations*, 17, 3, March 1986, pp. 18-31; V. Desai, "From illustrations to icons", *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, ed. B.N. Goswamy, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 97-127.
5. R.V. Somani, *History of Mewar*, Jaipur, 1976, pp. 268-70.
6. Royal collection, Udaipur.
7. Four of its books are preserved at Poona: K. Khandalavala, "Leaves from Rajasthan", *Marg*, IV, 3, 1950, pp. 2-24, 49-56; T. Shimizu, *The Bhagavata-Purana Miniature Paintings from the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Manuscript Dated 1648*, Tokyo, 1993.
8. Khandalavala, op. cit., fig. 1 and pl. A; Shimizu,

op. cit., pls. 3, 123.

9. Both in the British Library, London: J.P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, London, 1982, nos. 91-97; V. Dehejia, "The treatment of narrative in Jagat Singh's *Ramayana*", *Artibus Asiae*, LVI, 3/4, 1996, pp. 303-24.

10. J.P. Losty, *Indian Paintings in the British Library*, New Delhi, 1986, pl. XV; J.P. Losty, "Sahib Din's Book of Battles", *The Legend of Rama: Artistic Visions*, ed. V. Dehejia, Bombay, 1994, pp. 101-16.

11. *Varaha Purana*, ed. A.S. Gupta, tr. A. Bhattacharya, Benares, 1981, chs. 137-38.

12. Hence the name *Sukara-kshetra* (with short "u") or "place of the good deed", according to A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports 1862–65*, I, Simla, 1871, p. 266. But *Sukara-* (with long "u") or *Saukara-kshetra* are more often found, meaning more appropriately "the Field of the Boar", as given e.g. by H. von Glasenapp, *Heilige Staetten Indiens*, Munich, 1928, pp. 28-29.

13. E.T. Atkinson, *Statistical, Descriptive, and Historical Account of the North-western Provinces of India*, vol. IV: Agra Division, Part 1, Allahabad, 1876, pp. 209-12. See also S.M. Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India*, Berkeley, 1973, pp. 72-73 (including map).

14. Our knowledge of the royal pilgrimages of the period derives from the Rajaprasasti and Jagannatha temple inscriptions: e.g. Shyamaldas, *Vir Vinod*, II, Udaipur, 1886, p. 590; A.K. Vyas, "Jagannatharaya temple inscriptions", *Epigraphia Indica*, XXIV, 1937–38, II, p. 63; S.R. Sharma, *Maharana Raj Singh and His Times*, Delhi, 1971, pp. 16-17; Somani, loc. cit.

15. Atkinson, op. cit., p. 211.

16. *Iti srivarahapurana bhagavachhastre sukaraksetramahatmyam samaptam/samvat 1712 varse asvinamase suklapakse saradrtau vijayadasamyam punyatithau/maharajadhiraja maharana sri sri 5 raja simhaji vijaya rajye/sri/pustakam likhatam sri divanaji ri ajna thi citra likhanai/vyasa sri jayadevaji likhayo/ mahatma hiranamda likhatam/sahavadi citrama kiyo/ srir astu/subham astu.* An incorrect version of this colophon is given by G.N. Sharma, *Glories of Mewar*, Jaipur, 1974, p. 95. The *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya* series is briefly listed in M.L. Menaria, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of H.H. the Maharana of Udaipur*, Udaipur, 1943, no. 1666, pp. 174-75. Two of its illustrations (fols. 9, 18) have been published, with inaccurate identification: G.N. Sharma, *Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan*, Agra, 1968, pl. 4b; K. Khandalavala and S. Doshi, *A Collector's Dream*, Bombay, 1987, p. 90. Some at least, if not all, of the 26 pages in the series are now in the B.K. Birla family collection, Calcutta. It should be stressed that the present article offers no more than a preliminary account of the series, based on a knowledge of half of its pages. I am grateful to the late Dr W.G. Archer and to Prof. Daniel J. Ehnbom for kindly allowing me to use their photographs, and to Dr James Benson for his helpful comments on the colophon.

17. J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. W. Crooke, repr. Delhi, 1971, II, p. 683; Shyamaldas, op. cit., I, pp. 130-31.

18. National Museum, New Delhi: J. Brijbhushan, *The World of Indian Miniatures*, Tokyo, 1979, pl. 22, for a colour reproduction.

19. I am unacquainted with fols. 21-25 in particular and have not ascertained whether they might illustrate Ch. 139 of the published *Varaha Purana*, treated by its editor as a final section of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*. But since its content has no specific bearing on the Soron *tirthas*, this is perhaps unlikely. It mainly praises the use of cow-dung as a floor-covering, and the practices of floor-sweeping, devotional singing in the temple, and playing instruments and dancing. The topic of song gives rise to the story of a lowly Chandala or outcaste, whose meritorious nightly singing in the temple saves him from being devoured by a bloodthirsty *rakshasa* and even liberates the demon himself from his unhappy state.

COURT PAINTING FOR THE AMBER RULERS, CIRCA 1590–1727

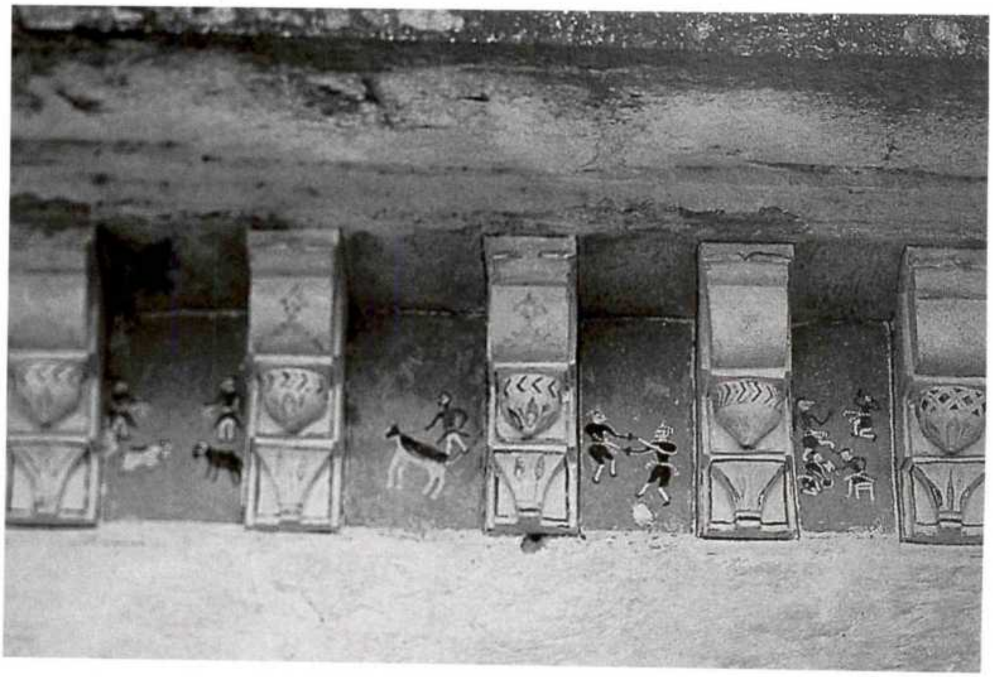
Asok Kumar Das

Amber was originally a minor kingdom in north-eastern Rajasthan, ruled by Kachhwaha Rajputs. It became well known only in the late sixteenth century after its rulers Bharmal and Bhagwant Das allied themselves with Emperor Akbar. Relations with the Mughal court were further strengthened by Man Singh (r. 1589–1614), and the history of Amber painting begins with his reign, as evidenced by surviving wall-paintings. Unfortunately, it must be said that Amber painting as a whole remains an area of darkness compared with the better documented schools of Mewar, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bundi, and Kota, mainly for lack of scholarly access to the former royal collections which still lie in the storerooms of the Jaipur City Palace. Much of this present brief survey will need to be revised when these materials become available for study. What can clearly be seen, however, is the strong contrast in mid- to late-seventeenth century Amber painting between the highly refined, Mughal-inspired art of court portraiture and the continuing, robust local Rajput style of manuscript illustration and wall-painting. This reflected a tension in the rulers' own lives caused by their long, enforced absences at the Mughal court or in distant imperial postings. Only at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the reign of Sawai Jai Singh, the last Kachhwaha ruler to reside at Amber, had these very disparate styles of painting begun to converge.

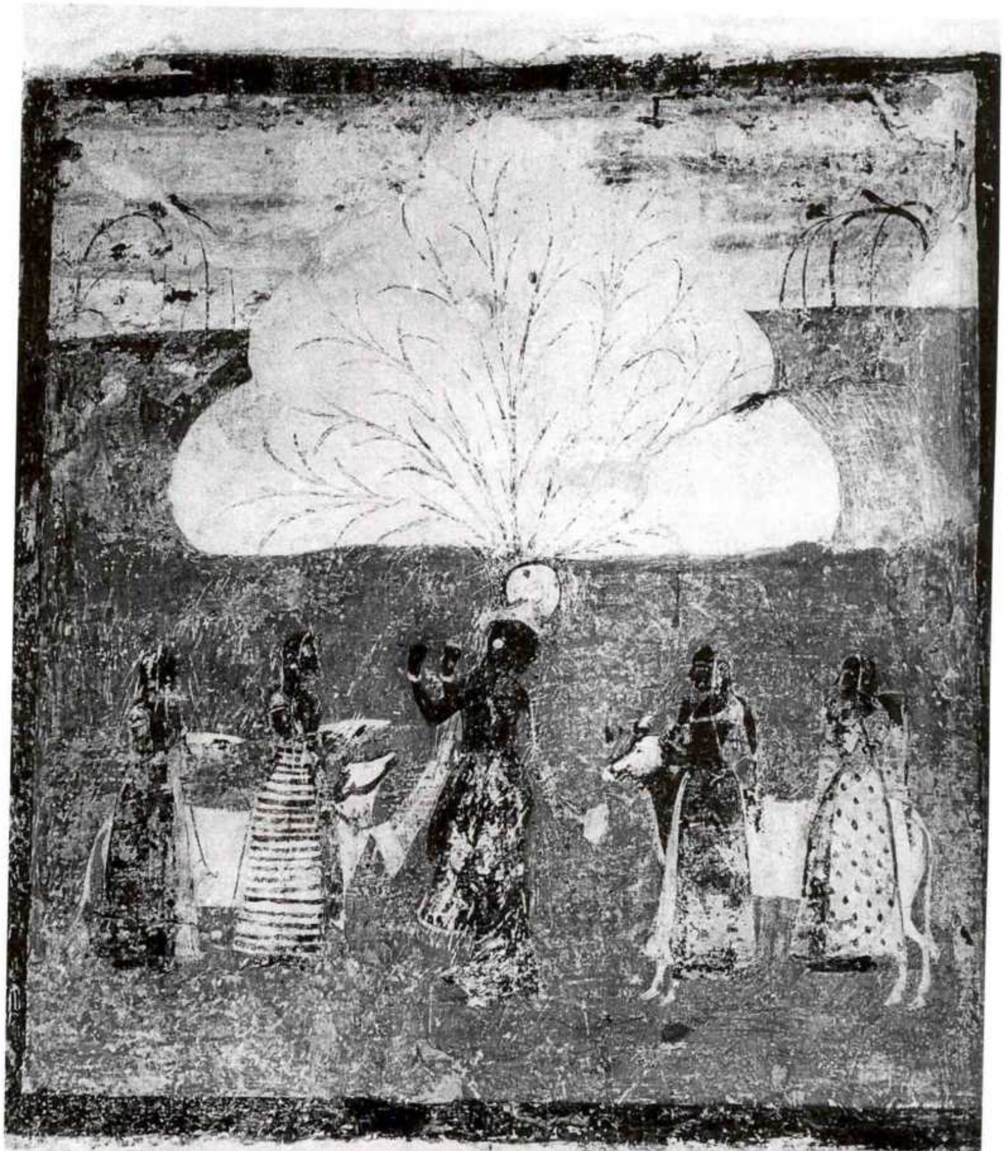
Raja Man Singh (1589–1614)

Man Singh spent his first twelve years at Mozumabad, a small town near Jaipur, to nullify the effects of a bad omen in his horoscope noticed by the court astrologer. He was brought to Akbar's court by his grandfather and within a short time won the emperor's confidence through his courage and administrative skills. He acquitted himself well as governor in the troubled provinces of Kabul, Bihar, and Bengal and acquired high rank and great wealth. His adoption of the cultural tastes of Akbar's court became apparent in his activities as a prolific builder and patron of the arts. Painting activity in Man Singh's Amber already included, at a regional level, a continuation of the ancient tradition of Jain manuscript painting, patronized by Jain merchants and officials, in which the sixteenth-century northern style of Jain painting was increasingly overlaid by elements of the widespread *Chaurapanchasika* and, later, the Popular Mughal styles.[1] At the level of court patronage only wall-paintings survive, as no manuscripts or portable paintings commissioned by Man Singh have yet been found.

Man Singh early in his reign constructed a new palace in the Amber fort, and, both at Amber and while serving in eastern India, went on to build many more palaces, temples, formal gardens and pavilions, *chhatri* memorials, and other structures, such as a river ghat at Varanasi.[2] Recalled from Bengal by Jahangir, he



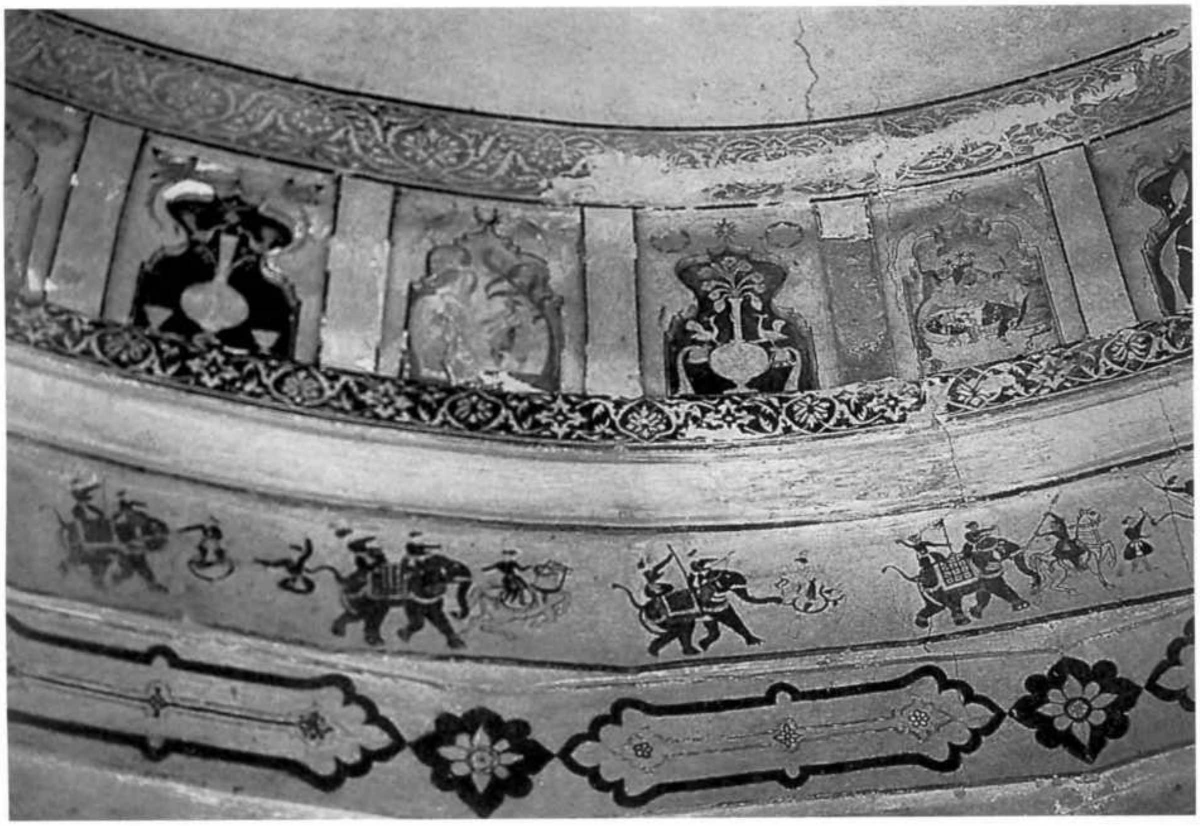
1
Wall-paintings below the *chajja* of the Man Singh Mahal, Amber fort, circa 1590.



2
Krishna playing the flute: wall-painting in Man Singh's private chamber, Man Singh Mahal, Amber fort, circa 1606.

spent three further productive years at Amber (1606–09), before his final posting to the Deccan. The interiors of Man Singh's buildings were in many cases richly decorated with wall-paintings, as is attested by two biographical works, both entitled *Man Charitra*, by Amrita Rai and Narottam Kavi,[3] the first composed in 1585 while Man Singh was a prince, and the second towards the end of his reign. Narottam Kavi identifies the subjects chosen for mural decoration in the Amber palaces as *ragamala, Krishnalila, Amaru Sataka*, and *nayaka-nayikabheda*, together with pictures of cranes, peafowl, parrots, and various animals and flowering plants, in bright shades of red, yellow, green, and other colours. However, centuries of neglect and whitewashing have obliterated all but a series of over a hundred small panels in the spaces between the brackets supporting the wide eaves (*chajja*) running around the courtyard of the Man Singh Mahal. These panels depict floral motifs, birds, animals, *peris* (winged angels), wrestlers, and women hunting, among other subjects (figure 1). There are also two large panels of Krishna playing the flute under a *kadamba* tree flanked by gopis, on the walls of the inner chamber of Man Singh's residence (figure 2).[4] These are in a folkish style but reveal some Popular Mughal influence. Instead of the bright hues described by the poet, the surviving panels now show only a limited colour range of lime white, red ochre, and lampblack on a pinkish ground.

The faded remains of elaborate painted decoration in the so-called Bharmal (in fact Man Singh) *chhatri*,[5] as well as in the Maqdum Shah ki Maqbara at Amber, the pavilion at Bairat,[6] and the Mozumabad palace,[7] reveal a wider range of subjects and styles and a generally improved technique. Man Singh had died at distant Elichpur in 1614, and his *chhatri* was completed in 1620. It contains a circular frieze on the lower part of the dome ceiling, divided into forty panels within graceful lobed arches. The various subjects include mythological scenes such as Krishna overcoming Kaliya, Vishnu mounted on Garuda, Sarasvati on a *hamsa*, the Matsya avatar of Vishnu, and



3
Painted interior of the dome of the Bairat pavilion, circa 1606–10.

Ganesha, besides secular or poetical subjects such as a hunting cheetah and its keeper, various fighting animals, Laila and Majnun, Todi *ragini*, wrestlers, birds, and a *simurgh* (mythical animal). The pigments used, in various shades and mixtures, are *geru* (red ochre), *ramraj* (yellow ochre), *safeda* (lime white), and lampblack. In style the panels show a closer familiarity with Popular Mughal painting of the early seventeenth century, and the male and female costumes resemble contemporary court fashions.

The Maqbara also was originally richly painted both inside and outside. The interior of the flattened bulbous dome was decorated with paintings of which only a central rosette surrounded by a ring of *peris* alternating with arabesques and medallions is faintly visible. On the outer wall it is possible to make out only a male figure wearing a *chakdar jama* (with a four-pointed hem), two female figures (one wearing a skirt-like dress, the other a long dark veil and high Chaghatai cap), and four birds in painted niches. These figures are very similar to those painted on the outer wall of the "garden pavilion" at Bairat, which was probably a domed gateway on the edge of a large tank, opening onto a causeway that leads to a garden. It was painted with carpet-like decoration and two continuous friezes alternating with decorative bands (figure 3). The lower frieze contains a procession of elephants, horses, and camels with a *palki* borne by two attendants, wrestlers, and fighting warriors. Above, a series of thirty-two panels in niches again depict various subjects such as Krishna, Ganesha, hunting scenes, a nobleman with ladies, *peris*, trees, and vases with stylized flowers flanked by cranes or other birds.[8]

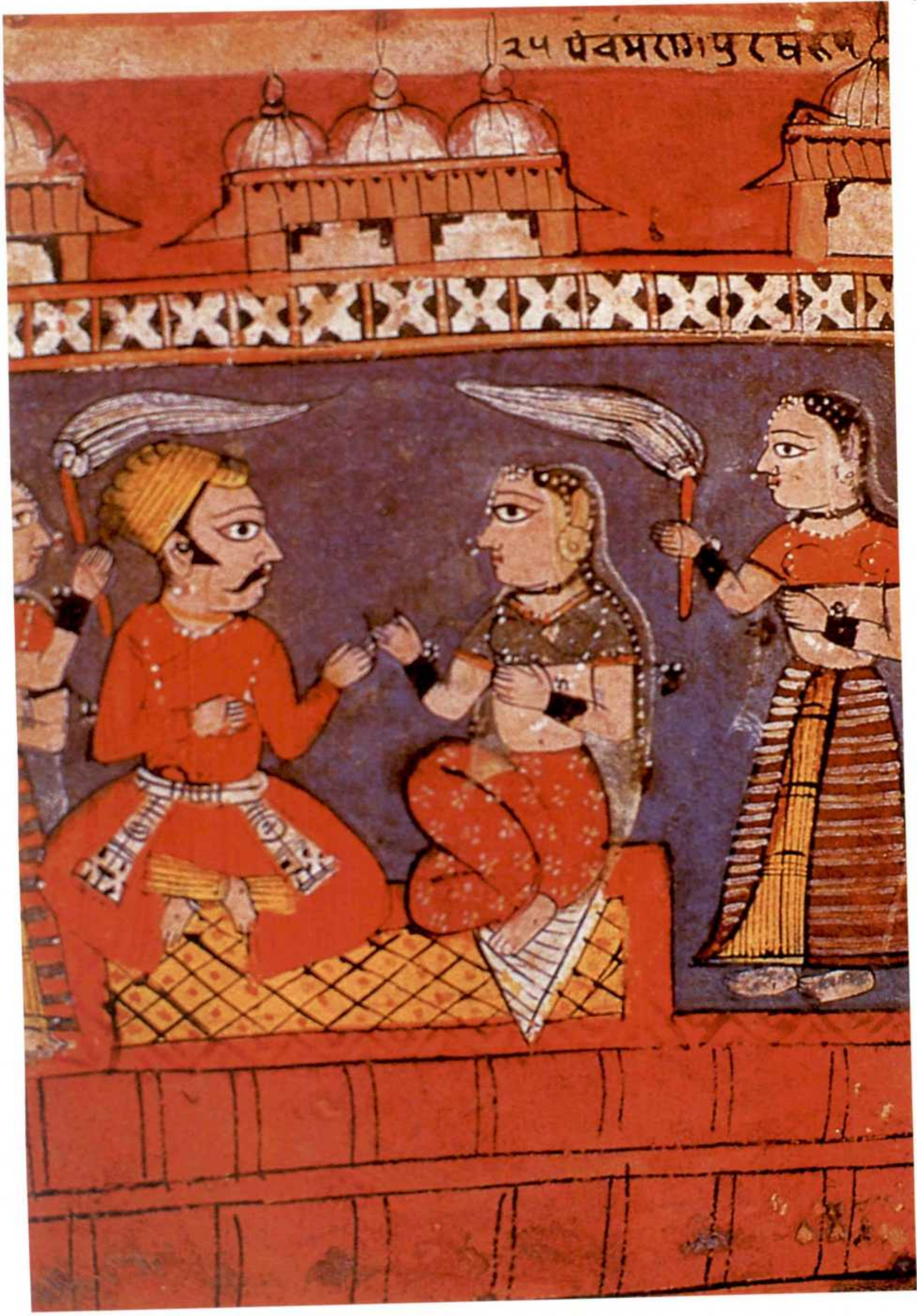
Man Singh was perhaps the first Amber ruler to start a royal *pothikhana* or manuscript studio and depository, where, as at the Mughal court, poets, writers, calligraphers, painters, and bookbinders worked together. He also collected a large number of manuscripts from various places.[9] Although portraits of Man Singh, his son Jagat Singh, and grandson Maha Singh have been found in the City Palace and elsewhere, there is no record of any painters working in the Mughal style at Amber at this period. The best known portraits of Man Singh are Mughal ones, from the Khurram and Nasr al-din Albums.[10] The latter example, by Payag, was later imitated by Amber portrait painters. However, a portrait of Man Singh's younger son Bhao Singh, who succeeded him (r. 1614–21), appears to be a product of the local Amber studio.[11] Though confidently drawn, it lacks the finish of the best Mughal portraits.

Mirza Raja Jai Singh (r. 1621–67)

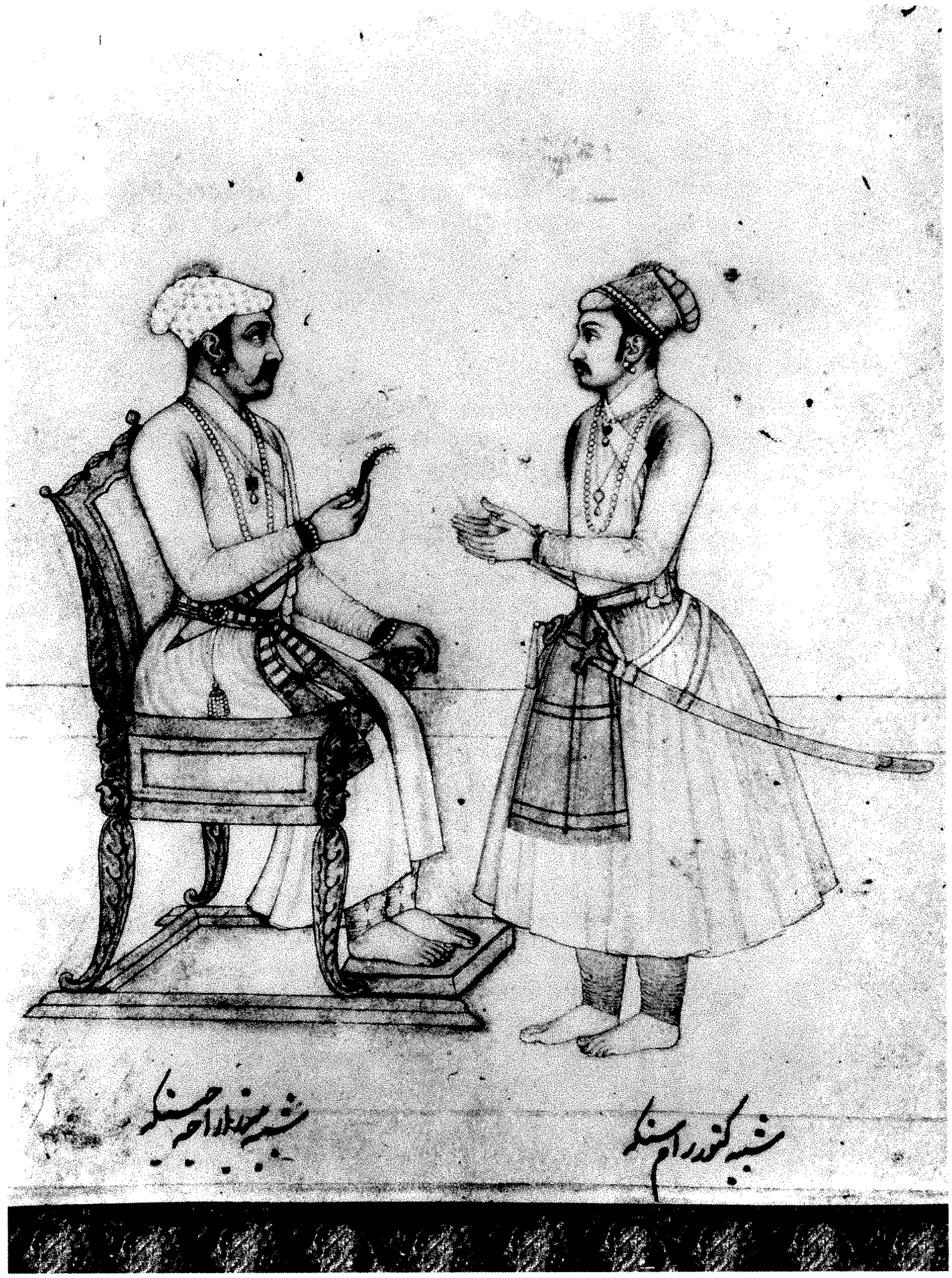
The reign of Mirza Raja Jai Singh inaugurated a new cultural phase at Amber. He enjoyed great power under both Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb and was one of the most cultured men of the age. The Amber fort was enriched with new palace buildings and gardens of classical Mughal design, lavishly decorated in the finest Shah Jahani tradition. Jai Singh was also a generous patron of art and literature. Renowned authors such as Bihari Das, who wrote his celebrated *Satsai* at Amber between 1661–67, adorned his court.[12] An earlier poetical work, the *Rasikapriya* of Kesav Das, also remained popular at Amber as elsewhere, and a copy was written there in 1639 for Chandravatji, queen of Jai Singh, with two very folkish illustrations.[13] Two mid-seventeenth century pages from another copy,[14] however, reveal some familiarity with the earlier, dispersed "Boston" *Rasikapriya* in a refined Popular Mughal style, which has also been attributed recently to the Amber studio,[15] but the superior technique and soft palette of the Boston series are lacking. *Ragamala* was another favourite subject of the seventeenth-century Rajasthani schools, but no dated Amber series of this

4

Pancham *ragini*, from a dispersed *ragamala*. Amber, circa 1650. Gouache on paper. Sangram Singh family collection, Jaipur.



5
Mirza Raja Jai Singh presenting a *sarpech* to his son Prince Ram Singh. Amber, circa 1655. Partially coloured drawing on paper; 26.2 x 18.0 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees o the Chester Beatty Library.


شبیه مرزا راجه جسنگه
شبیه کنور رام سنگه

period has yet been found, though it is likely that a number of known stray pages were painted there.[16] These vary in style from early, more or less Popular Mughal-influenced works[17] to a naive, mid-seventeenth century local style with short, thickset figures (figure 4), recalling the style of the 1639 *Rasikapriya*.

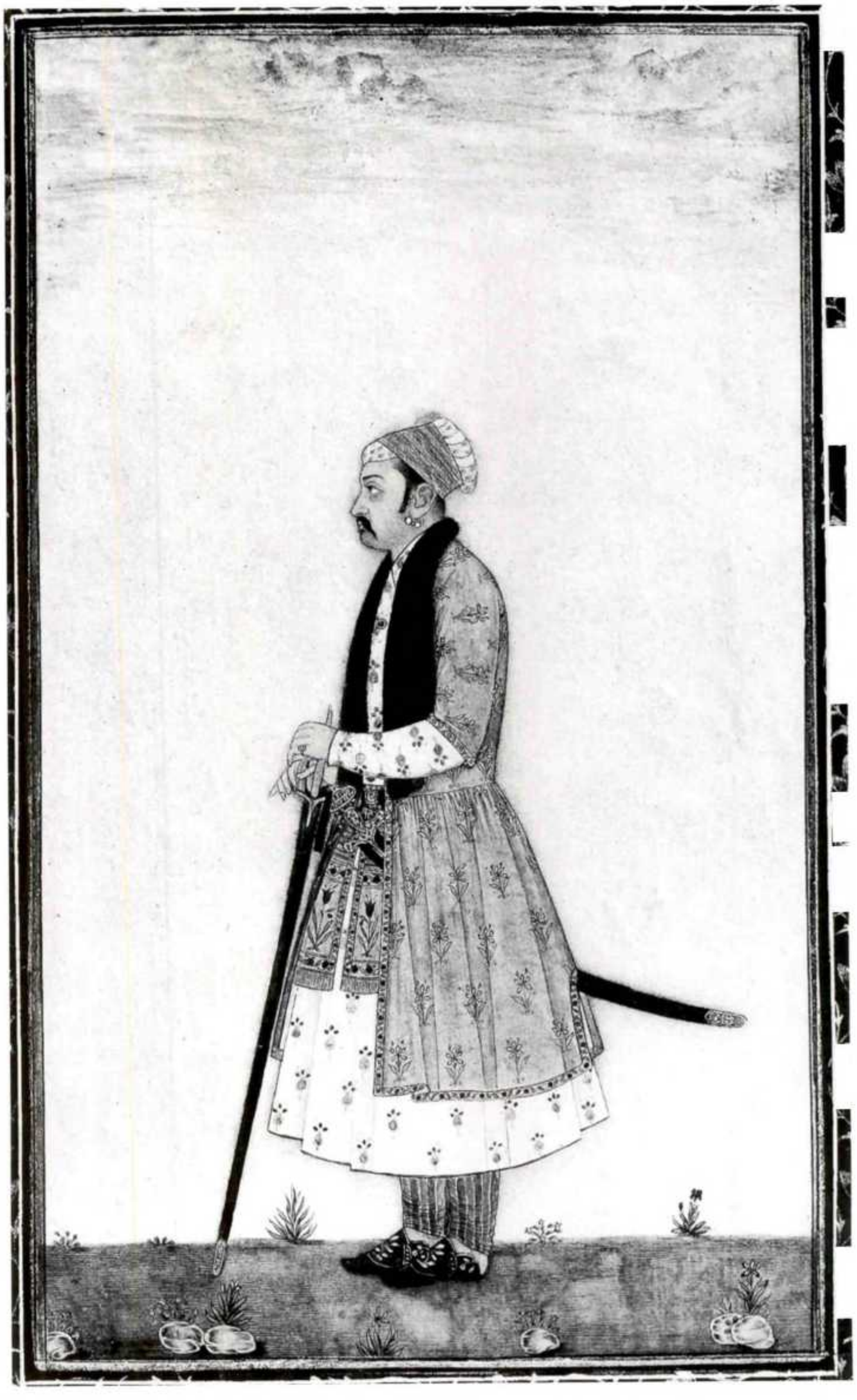
Such works stand in marked stylistic contrast to the Amber royal portraits following the imperial Mughal style. The finest of these is the joint portrait of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur, in Los Angeles.[18] Its setting includes the most luxurious trappings and is comparable in finish with the finest Mughal portraits. It is doubtful that a portrait of two vassal rulers seated on such a large throne, on a rare blue-ground arabesque pile carpet under a canopy of costliest Safavid figured velvet, would have been an imperial commission. Glynn and Smart have plausibly attributed it to a Mughal-trained artist working for Mirza Raja Jai Singh, who was also a renowned collector of Mughal and Persian carpets and textiles.

Other strongly Mughal-influenced portraits of Jai Singh and his son Prince Ram Singh are more likely works of the mid-seventeenth century royal studio, by Mughal-trained artists either working at Amber or in the ruler's entourage while he was serving in distant provinces, since Jai Singh – like his contemporary Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, another important Rajput patron of portraiture – spent much of his career far from home in the imperial service. A partly coloured study of Jai Singh seated on a throne bestowing a *sarpech* (turban ornament) on his son Ram Singh, inscribed with their names in Persian, is of exceptionally fine quality (figure 5).[19]

Two portraits of Jai Singh at an advanced age show him in each case similarly dressed and facing left with his hands placed on his sword hilt. One, in Berlin (figure 6), is inscribed with his name and depicts him in a landscape with small flowering plants, wearing an opulent costume and jewellery. The other, in the Benkaim collection, appears to be based on the same *charba* (tracing).[20] Both seem to have been painted towards the end of Jai Singh's life. Censured by Aurangzeb after a disastrous campaign against Bijapur, Jai Singh died a broken man in 1667.

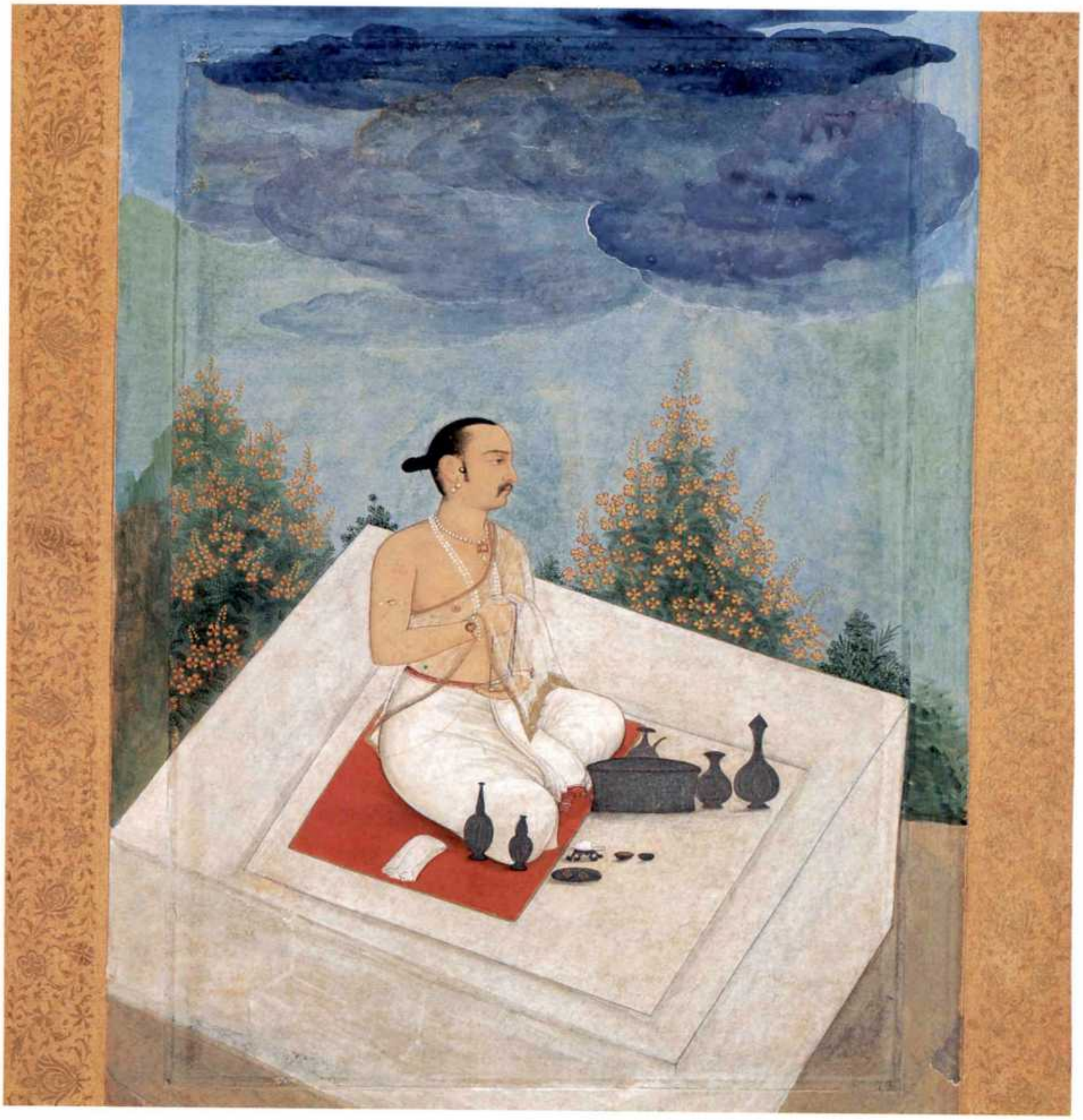
6

Mirza Raja Jai Singh in old age. Amber, circa 1667. Gouache on paper; 18.4 x 10.8 cm. Islamisches Museum, Berlin.



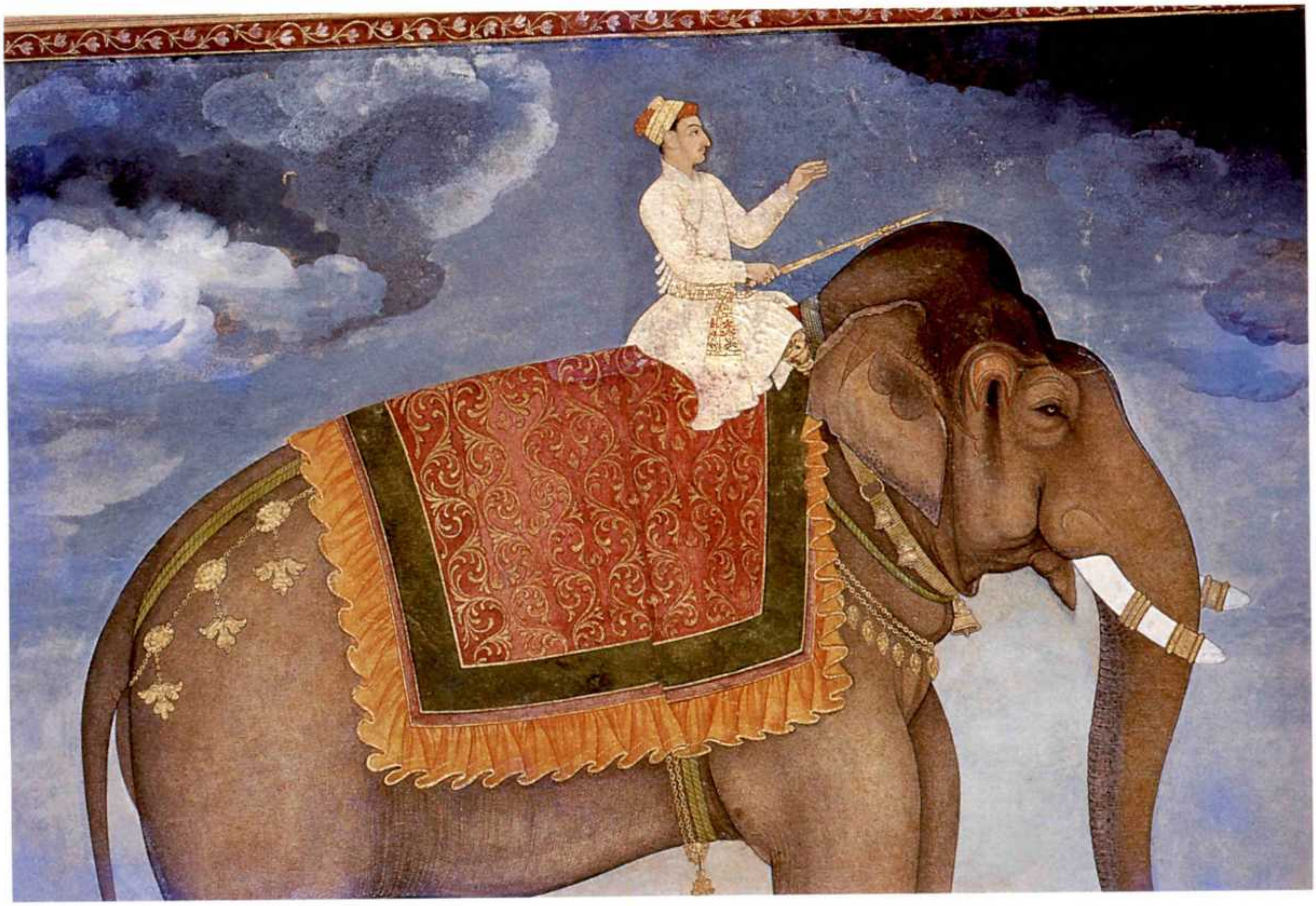
Ram Singh I (r. 1667–89)

Ram Singh also was a man of high accomplishments and a keen patron and collector.[21] Born in 1635, he spent much of his princely life at Aurangzeb's court, until his disgrace following the escape of the Maratha leader Shivaji from captivity. As ruler after Jai Singh's death, Ram Singh in his turn had to spend long periods in the inhospitable regions of Assam and the northwest. A number of portraits of him are known, more often as a prince than as ruler. A delightful portrait of the young prince in his early teens, in a private collection,[22] originally came from the Amber Album, of which many known pages show Amber princes and their contemporaries. The album seems to have reached the Mewar court as a result of Sawai Jai Singh's alliance with Maharana Amar Singh II (r. 1698–1710). A Mughal portrait of Prince Ram Singh, mounted on a page from the Late Shah Jahan Album, shows him at a slightly older age.[23] Further Amber portraits of the prince show him more informally, with his ladies in the zenana in an almost *ragamala*-like composition,[24] at his private worship on a garden terrace (figure 7),[25] or standing alone in a flowered robe on a hillock in a landscape.[26] It was



7

Prince Ram Singh at worship. Amber, circa 1660. Gouache on paper; 17 x 12 cm (without the later enlargement of the picture surface). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



probably under Ram Singh also that a stylistic integration began to develop of the hitherto relatively crude local style of manuscript illustration with the more refined techniques deriving from Mughal portraiture. A number of *ragamala* pages are known in which the heroes appear to resemble Ram Singh or other princes.

Ram Singh's gifted son Kishan Singh (born 1654), who was to predecease him, also made his mark early as a warrior in the imperial service. A superb portrait of the young prince mounted on an elephant, following contemporary Mughal models and in the best imperial style, is found in an album in a private collection (figure 8). From Amber itself, an interesting document in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum is Kishan Singh's horoscope, which is of prodigious length (139 metres long, 33 centimetres wide) and liberally illustrated with figures of planets, stars, deities, and other subjects including a portrait of the prince himself.[27] The pictures are of a coarse quality and are undoubtedly of contemporary Amber origin. It is ironic that the prince for whom this largest of horoscopes was prepared died at the age of only twenty-seven. Ram Singh was heartbroken at the death of his gifted son. When he too died at distant Kohat in 1689 the *gaddi* passed to his young grandson Bishan Singh.

Bishan Singh (1689–99)

At least two portraits of Bishan Singh are known at present, as well as a fragmentary manuscript treatise on massage,[28] prepared for him in 1692, which seems also to depict him. Its illustrations show a fair-complexioned prince resembling the youthful Raja with his dark masseur, wearing

8
Prince Kishan Singh riding a royal elephant (detail). Mughal style under Amber patronage, circa 1675. Gouache on paper. Private collection.

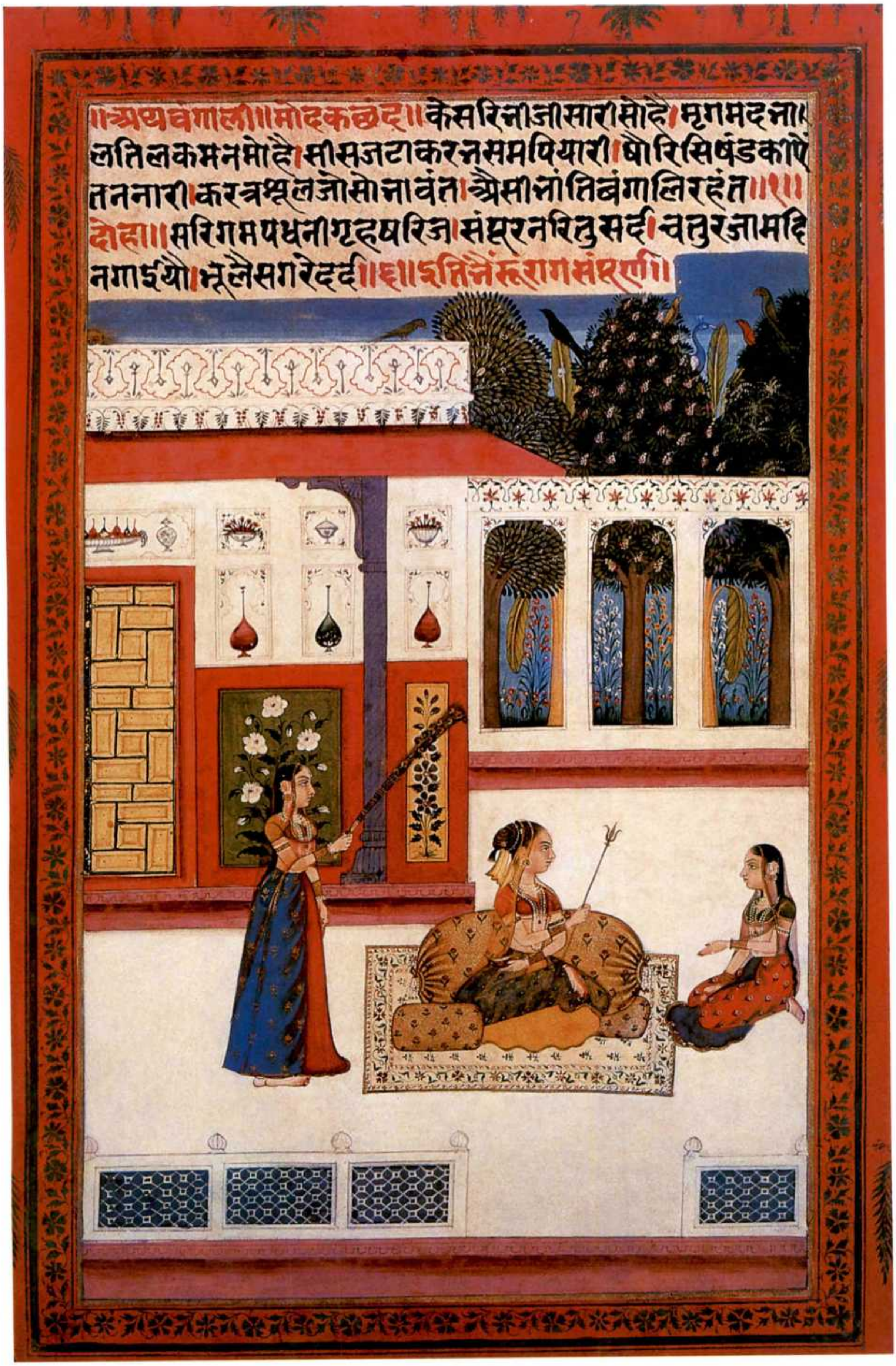
only a loincloth. They include no other figures or background detail and so throw little light on the development of the Amber style during his short reign. Of the two known portraits, one is a crisply executed study by Ustad Gulab Rai.[29] Nothing else is known of this painter, although with the rank of Ustad he must clearly have been a Mughal master of some standing. The other, in the local Amber style under Mughal influence, shows Bishan Singh on horseback hawking in a marshy terrain, with numerous retainers.[30] Bishan Singh in turn died in the snowbound hills of the northwest on December 31, 1699 at the age of twenty-seven, and was succeeded by his eleven-year-old son Jai Singh.

Sawai Jai Singh (1699–1743)

The more long-lived Sawai Jai Singh was to become one of the most successful and influential of all the Kachhwaha rulers. His honorific title Sawai, meaning "one and one-fourth", was granted by Aurangzeb. After the Emperor's death Jai Singh was able to take political advantage of the instability at Delhi. He was moreover a committed patron of art and architecture, while his intellectual interests extended to religion, philosophy, and literature, as well as science and astronomy. The most far-reaching among his many enterprises was the foundation of the new, planned city of Jaipur, a few miles from Amber, in 1727. After the removal of the court to this new capital, the Amber fort, like Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri before it, gradually turned into a ghost city.

An important set of paintings from Jai Singh's reign is the *ragamala* in the Kankroli art collection (figure 9), with a colophon stating that it was prepared at Amber fort in 1709.[31] This is the earliest dated *ragamala* known from the Amber-Jaipur school. Besides this set, at least five *ragamala* series of the same period show similar late Mughal columns and arches, dados decorated with large flowering plants, pinkish-brown eaves with blue geometrical motifs, and flat-roofed open pavilions recalling the garden pavilion in the eastern part of the Jaigarh fort added by Sawai Jai Singh. The principal male figure often resembles the youthful ruler, while the female figures are characteristically tall and slender and vary from fair to dark in complexion. The finest and probably the earliest set in the group is now dispersed.[32] In Malkauns *raga*, one of its finest pages (figure 10), the hero resembles portraits of Sawai Jai Singh as a young man (figure 11).[33] He stands on a golden footstool holding a floral wand, accompanied by three wives, Todi, Gauri, and Kakubha *raginis*, as given in the inscription above. The Kankroli and other sets seem to derive from this series, but in their drawing and colouring appear to be the work of lesser artists painting at a more hurried pace, as seen in stray pages in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum and Sangram Singh collection (figure 12), or the twelve-folio set in the Baroda Museum.[34] A few folios of a damaged and dispersed *Baramasa Sadrituvarnan* series and two *Nayikabheda* pages belong to the same style and period.[35]

Towards the end of Sawai Jai Singh's reign there was a further access of Mughal influence at Amber. Court records in the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner indicate that he brought two painters from Delhi, Fazl Muhammad and Sadiq Muhammad. This was probably after 1717 when he first visited the imperial court. No signed works by them have been found, but they would undoubtedly have contributed to the albums compiled for Sawai Jai Singh.[36] One of these, procured in the sixth year of Farrukhsiyyar's reign at the high cost of Rs 600, had originally contained paintings of bird, animal, fruit, and flower subjects and twenty-one pages of calligraphy. Jai Singh had the calligraphic pages replaced with subjects of women, yoginis, and genre scenes. A painting of

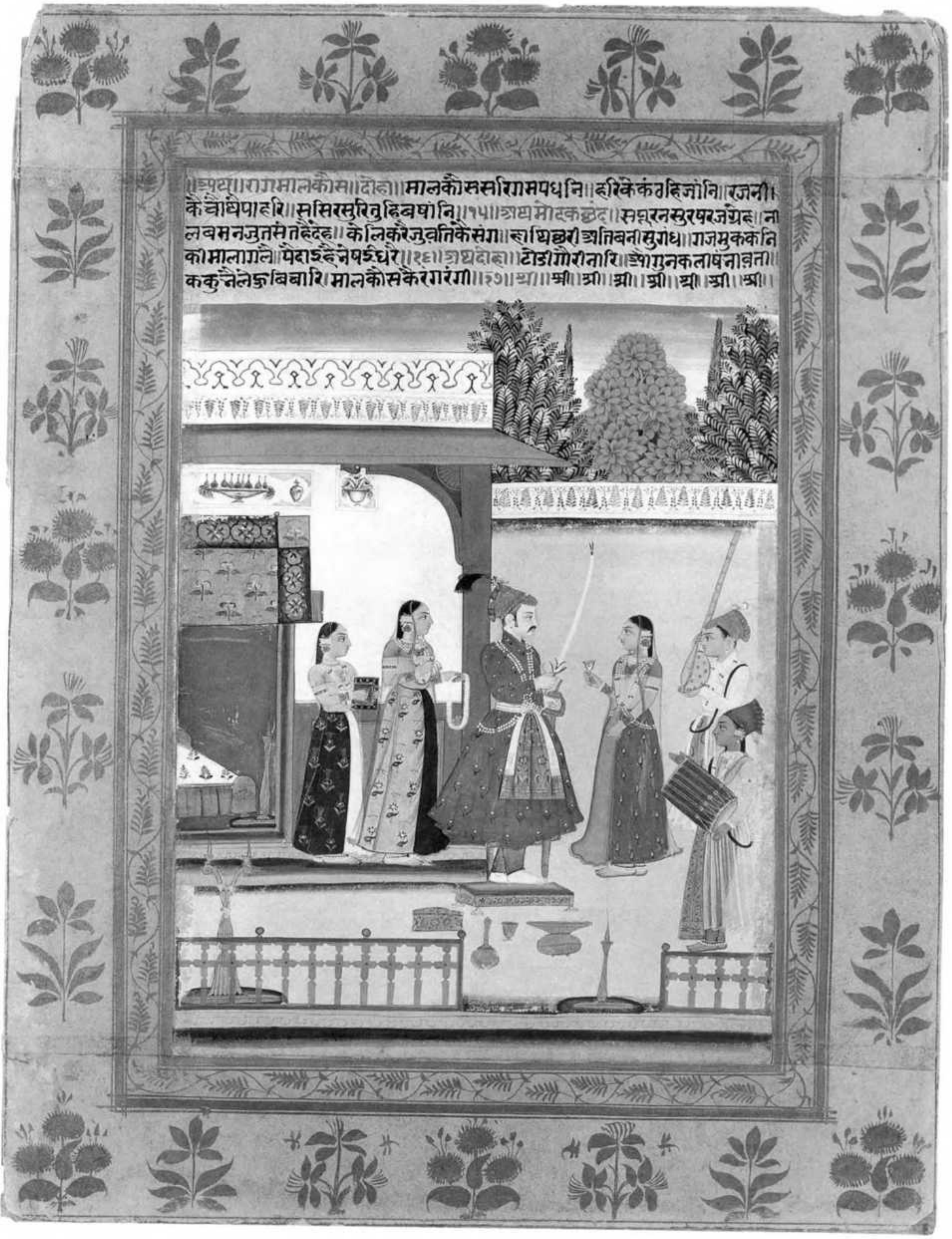

॥अथबंगाली॥मोदकछंद॥केसरिजाजीसारीसोहे।मृगमदना
लतिलकमनमोहे।सीसजटाकरनसमपियारी।षोरिसिषंडकाऐं
तननारी।करत्रश्चलजोसोनावंत।ऐसीभांतिबंगालिरहंत॥१॥
दोहा॥सरिगमपधनीगृहपरिज।संपूरनरितुसर्द।चतुरजामदि
नगाइयै।भूलैसगरेदर्द॥६॥इतिबंगालीरागसंपूर्ण॥

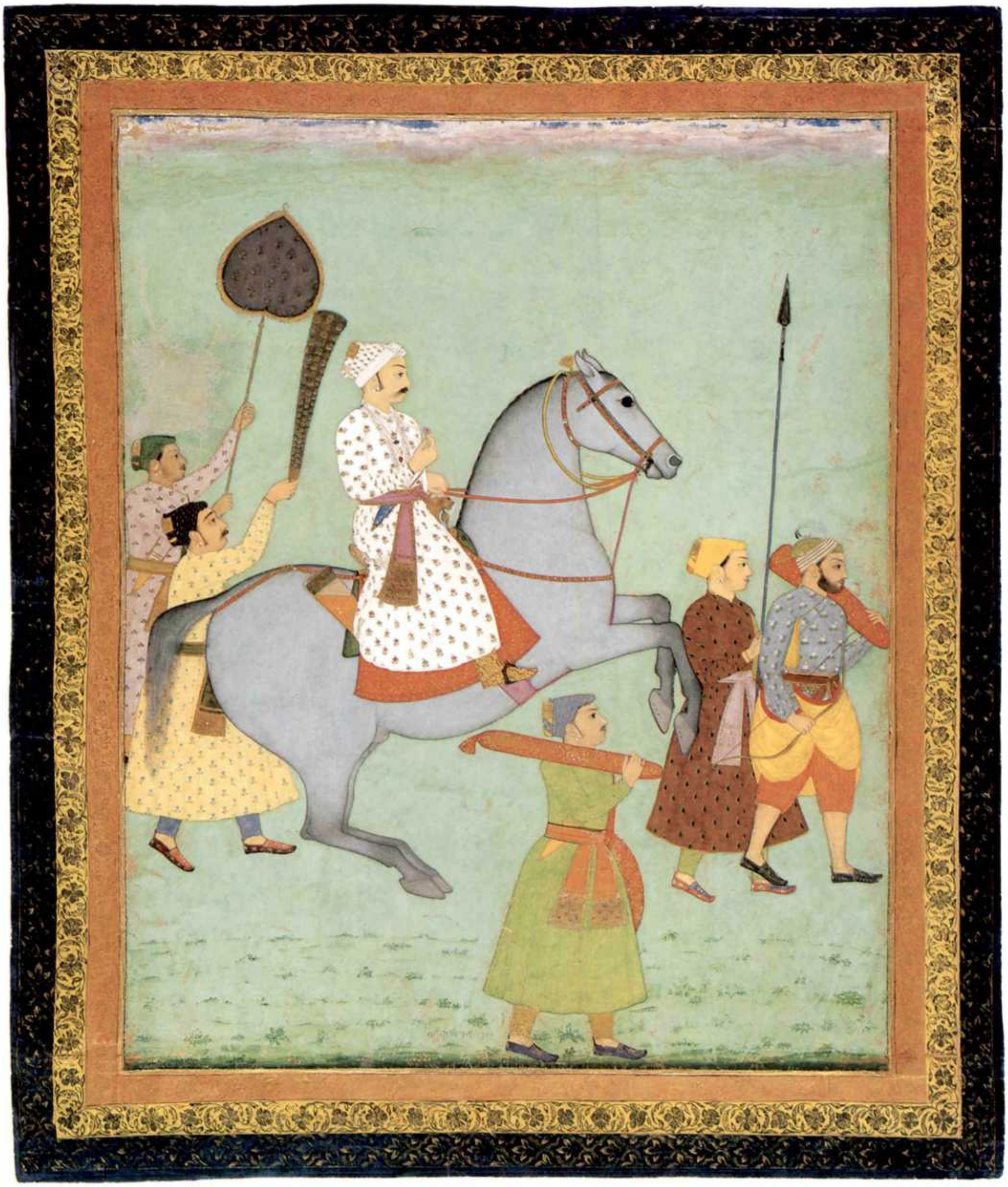
9

Bangali *ragini*. Amber, 1709. Gouache on paper; 28 x 18 cm. Maharaja of Kankroli collection, Baroda.

10

Malkauns *raga*, from a dispersed *ragamala*. Amber, circa 1705. Opaque watercolour on paper with gold and silver; 31.7 x 20.8 cm. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Gift of Mr Ashok K. Mehra.


॥अथ॥ राग मालकौस॥ दोहा॥ मालकौस स रि ग म प ध नि॥ हरि के कंठ हि जांनि॥ रजनी॥
के चौथे पा हरि॥ ससिर सुरितु हि बषांनि॥१५॥ अथ मोदक छंद॥ सम्रन सुर षरज ग्रह॥ ना
ल बसन जुत सेत है देह॥ केलि करै जुवति के संग॥ थिछरी अति बनी सुगंध॥ गजमुक्क कनि
का माला गले॥ पैदा इहे नेषई घेरे॥१६॥ अथ दोहा॥ टोडी गौरी नारि॥ गुन कला षनावती॥
ककु नैले कुबिचारि॥ मालकौस के रंग रंगी॥१७॥ श्री॥ श्री॥ श्री॥ श्री॥ श्री॥ श्री॥ श्री॥ श्री॥

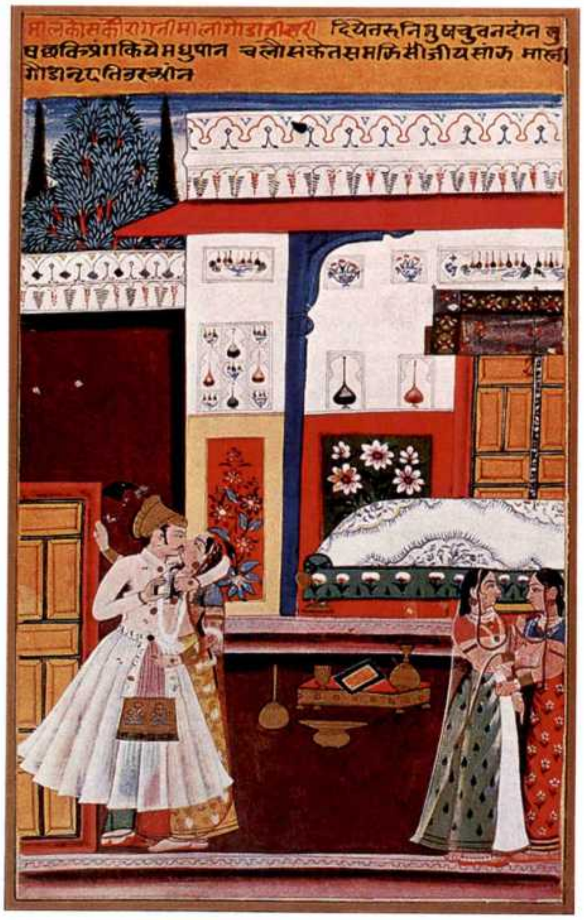


11
Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh riding with attendants. Amber, circa 1705–10. Gouache on paper. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

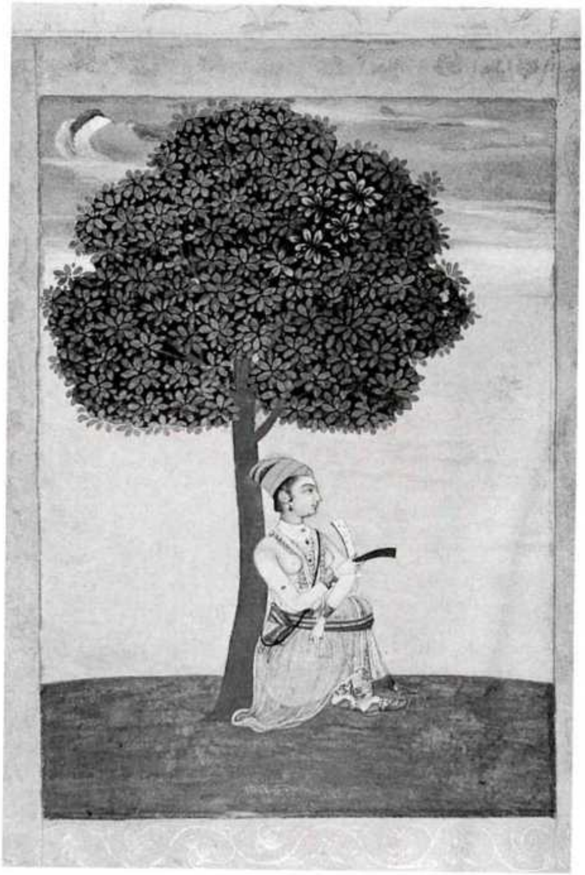
a yogini seated under a tree in a landscape (figure 13) is dated 1725.[37] It is clearly the work of a competent Mughal-trained artist working at Amber shortly before its abandonment by Sawai Jai Singh and his successors for the new capital of Jaipur.

NOTES

1. Three Digambar Jain illustrated manuscripts from the Amber region in his reign are: two MSS of the *Yashodharacharita*, written at Amber in 1590 and 1591, and an *Adipurana* written at Mozumabad in 1606. See respectively: K. Khandalavala and S. Doshi, "Miniature paintings", *Jaina Art and Architecture*, ed. A. Ghosh, III, New Delhi, 1975, p. 426, pl. 283b, and R.V. Somani, "Survey of Jain paintings from Rajasthan", *Mahavir Jayanti Smarika*, Jaipur, 1980, p. 19; S. Doshi, *Masterpieces of Jain Painting*, Bombay, 1985, p. 70, pp. 138-39 (fig. 13) for the 1590 MS, and pp. 70 (figs. 6, 7), 71 (fig. 9), and 87 (fig. 2) for the 1606 *Adipurana*, whose completed pages are by at least two painters, working in varying *Chaurapanchasika* and Popular Mughal-influenced styles. A later *Yashodharacharita* MS from the region was written by an Ajmer scribe at Jobner in 1636, and again reveals a liberal absorption of the Popular Mughal style: S. Doshi, op. cit., pp. 70, 138-39 (fig. 9).
2. R.N. Prasad, *Raja Man Singh of Amber*, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 146-70; C. Asher, "Sub-imperial patronage: The architecture of Raja Man Singh", *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. B.S. Miller, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 183-201; idem, *Architecture of Mughal India: New Cambridge History of India*, I, 4, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 67-74.
3. G.N. Bahura, *Literary Heritage of the Rulers of Amber and Jaipur*, Jaipur, 1976, pp. 33-34; idem, "Amer sthita Man Singh Mahal ke Bhittichitra", *The Researcher (A Bulletin of Rajasthan's Archaeology and Museums)*, XII-XIII, Jaipur, 1972–73, pp. 63-70.
4. Hot Chand, "Conservation of wall-paintings at Amber palaces", *The Researcher*, XII-XIII, 1972–73, pp. 59-62 and figs.
5. K. Khandalavala, *Wall Paintings from Amber*, New Delhi, 1974; R.K. Vashistha, "An inscription on Raja Man Singh's memorial at Amber", *Lalit Kala*, 20, 1982, p. 37.
6. H. Goetz, "The Early Rajput murals of Bairat", *Ars Orientalis*, I, 1954, pp. 113-18, pls. XXXVII-XXXIX.



12
Malavi *ragini*. Amber, circa 1705–10. Gouache on paper. Sangram Singh family collection, Jaipur.



13
Yogini seated under a tree. Amber, VS 1782 (1725). Gouache on paper. Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur (no. AG 935).

7. However the wall-paintings in a chamber at Mozumabad have all but disappeared, leaving only traces of birds, animals, courtiers, elephant fights, and hunting scenes, in a comparable style to the Amber murals discussed here.

8. There are also four smaller pavilions at the four corners, two containing traces of paintings in the four segments of the cross-vaulted dome. A heavily built nobleman is shown in three panels in one of these corner vaults, with Krishna in the fourth; on two of the panels of another pavilion Akbar is shown seated on a low throne with an attendant, and being entertained by female musicians and dancers or offered drink and *pan* and a waist-sash. A third scene shows a man shaking a tree (alluding to a Mahabharata story of Bhima), and a fourth Laila and Majnun. The dome ceiling here was finely decorated with medallions, floral and arabesque motifs, and *peris*, in a manner comparable to Akbar's mausoleum at Sikandra and other monuments of Jahangir's reign.

9. Bahura, op. cit., pp. 29-34. These acquisitions by Man Singh, who was a devout Hindu, probably include an important unpublished MS of the *Bhagavata Purana*, now in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur, which was written in 1598 (VS 1655) for an affluent businessman of Lahore, Banamali Das, with nearly a thousand illustrations by Govinda Das, son of Narada. Some stray folios of a *Gita Govinda* by the same artist or in a similar style of the early seventeenth century have also been found in the *pothikhana*: K. Vatsyayan, *Miniatures of the Gita-Govinda*, Jaipur, 1980.

10. S.C. Welch, *India: Art and Culture*, New York, 1985, no. 107 (Metropolitan Museum no. 1982.174); L. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, London, 1994, I, no. 3.31.

11. J. Losty, *Indian Book Painting*, London, 1986, no. 47; T. Falk and M. Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981, no. 44 (not illus.).

12. Several unillustrated MSS of the *Satsai* are found in the *pothikhana*; Bahura, op. cit., pp. 38-42. A single illustrated folio found by Bahura points to the commissioning of such a copy which is now lost: G.N. Bahura and C. Singh, "Some illustrated Rajasthani manuscripts from the Maharaja Man Singh II Museum", *Art Heritage*, 2, New Delhi, n.d., fig. 6. H. Goetz, "The Kachhwaha school of Rajput painting", *Bulletin of the Baroda Museum*, IV, 1-2, 1946–47, p. 39, fig. 9, noticed an illustrated copy of the *Satsai* in the Mandhata Singh collection, Bikaner, dated 1647–49, but this illustration appears to be of a later date.

13. A.K. Das, "Miniatures", in *Homage to Jaipur*, ed. M.R. Anand, Bombay, 1977, fig. 3.

14. Bahura and Singh, op. cit., fig. 7.

15. M.C. Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting: New Cambridge History of India*, I:3, Cambridge, 1992, p. 185. For the Boston *Rasikapriya*, see A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, VI, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, pls. VIII-XIX.

16. In the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, the Jaipur City Palace private collection, and the late Kumar Sangram Singh family collection.

17. Bahura and Singh, op. cit., fig. 1, a folio of Gauda *ragini* (Pothikhana collection), in a style not far removed from the Amber and Bairat wall-paintings. A more strongly sub-imperial set attributable to Amber is known from four pages: P. Pal, *Indian Painting*, I, Los Angeles, 1993, no. 90; idem, *Indo-Asian Art from the John Gilmore Ford Collection*, Baltimore, 1971, no. 31. This set was clearly prepared for a patron close to the Mughal court, such as Madho Singh, the younger brother of Man Singh, whose house at Agra was a centre of musical culture, or possibly even Mirza Raja Jai Singh himself.

18. Los Angeles County Museum of Art: in spite of its Devanagari inscription, the portrait of Jai Singh was long misidentified as Shah Shuja', until Catherine Glynn and Ellen Smart's recent corrective article: "A Mughal icon re-examined", *Artibus Asiae*, 57, 1/2, 1997, pp. 5-15.

19. L. Leach, op. cit., II, no. 10.18.

20. C. Glynn, "Evidence of royal painting for the Amber court", *Artibus Asiae*, 56, 1/2, 1996, fig. 11 (identified there as a portrait of Ram Singh).

21. Bahura, op. cit., pp. 42ff.

22. Glynn, op. cit., fig. 1.

23. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts: ibid., fig. 2. Another fine portrait of Ram Singh, in the Jaipur City Palace, is unpublished.

24. Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai: ibid., fig. 4.

25. Ibid., fig. 6; A.Topsfield, *Indian Paintings from*

Oxford Collections, Oxford, 1994, no. 18.

26. Private collection: Glynn, op. cit., fig. 5. I would however tend to disagree with Glynn's identification as Ram Singh of her fig. 7 (the subject is bearded, and no Amber prince is known to have grown a beard), and possibly fig. 8. The subject of her group of hunting pictures (figs. 12–15) is very probably not Ram Singh, as his name is not known to appear in the form Ram Chand in any court record, genealogy, or Mughal chronicle. This figure seems instead to have been an art-loving Thakur or nobleman.

27. Das, "Miniatures", p. 79, fig. 6. Also connected with Kishan Singh is the same Museum's copy of *Rasapradipa Tika*, a Marathi commentary on the *Sangita Ratnakara* by Nur Khan, written at Jaisinghpura (on the outskirts of Aurangabad) in 1679, with four paintings by two different mid-sixteenth century Deccani artists: ibid., figs. 7 and 8.

28. In the City Palace, Jaipur; unpublished.

29. Falk and Archer, op. cit., no. 135.

30. In the City Palace, Jaipur; unpublished.

31. S. Andhare, "A dated Amber ragamala", *Lalit Kala*, 15, 1972, pp. 47-51; K. Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, 1973, set no. 46 et var. loc. Bahura, op. cit., p. 70, speculates that it may have travelled to Kankroli through the guru of Sawai Madho Singh I (r. 1750–67), who was a follower of the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya at Kankroli.

32. Goetz, "Kachhwaha school", pls. 8-9; idem, *Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*, Oxford, 1950, pl. 94; S. Czuma, *Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection*, Cleveland, 1975, no. 97; Leach, *Indian Miniature Paintings*, pp. 167-69; A. Poster, *Realms of Heroism*, Brooklyn, 1994, nos. 101-02; S. Doshi, ed., *The Royal Bequest: Art Treasures in the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery*, Bombay, 1995, p. 89.

33. Also Das, "Miniatures", pl. 3, a portrait in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum.

34. O.C. Gangoly, *Critical Catalogue of Miniature Paintings in the Baroda Museum*, Baroda, 1961, pp. 152-53, pl. XLIIa; Ebeling, op. cit., col. pls. 13, 27; S. Singh, *Exhibition of Dhundhar Painting*, Jaipur, 1977, nos. 5-8, pl. 8; Das, "Miniatures", pl. 2, idem, *Treasures of Indian Painting*, V, Jaipur, 1986, pl. I. For two further similar sets see Ebeling, set nos. 44, 49.

35. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue*, op. cit., V, pls. CIV-CV; Bahura and Singh, op. cit., fig. 7; V.P. Dwivedi, *Baramasa Painting*, New Delhi, 1980, pl. 117.

36. Sangram Singh, op. cit., p. 2, notes that Sawai Jai Singh had a painter called Muhammad Shah who illustrated a "manuscript on Krishna" which is now dispersed, but no further details are given.

37. A.K. Das, "Notes on an Aurangzeb period album of bird and animal paintings", *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, eds. B.N. Goswamy and U. Bhatia, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 72-73.

NEW DISCOVERIES

I. EXPOSITION OF THE BIJAMANDALA TEMPLE IN KHAJURAHO

Phani Kanta Mishra

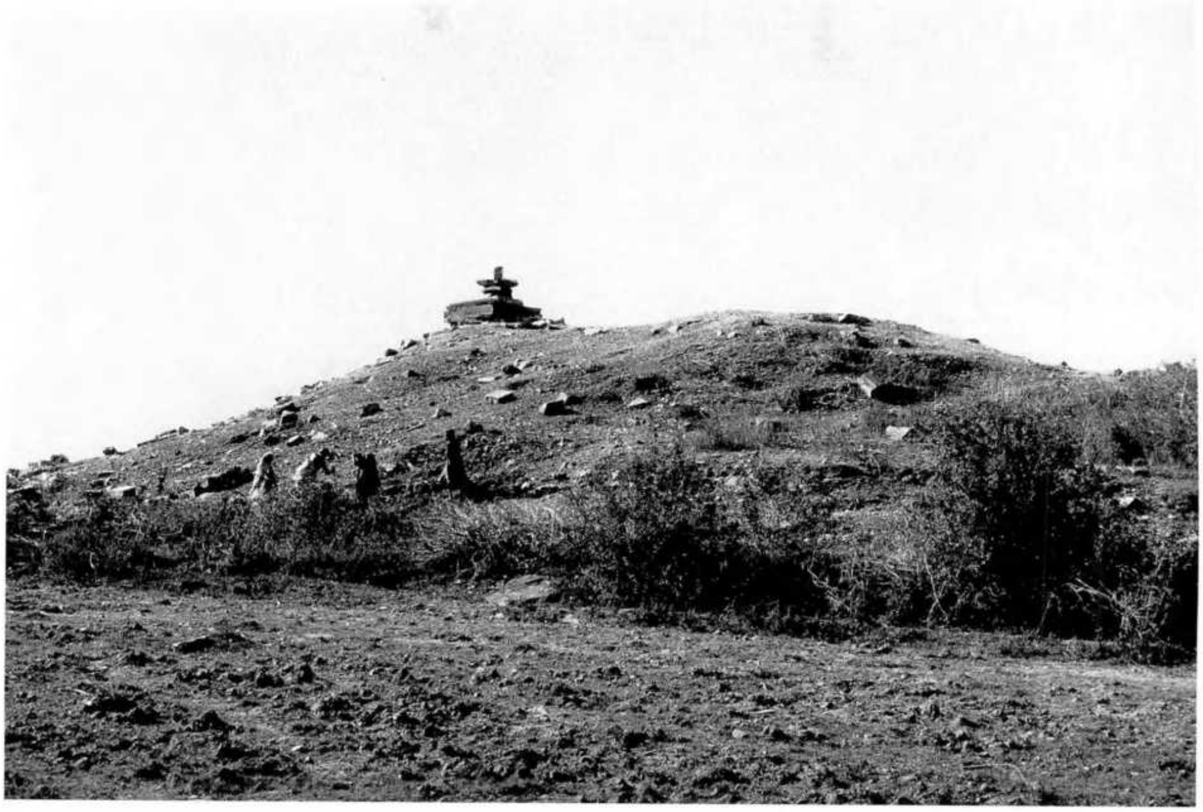
The visible panorama of Khajuraho covers twenty-two exquisite temples spanning a period from the ninth to twelfth centuries CE. Located in Chhatarpur district in the northern part of Madhya Pradesh, this temple town of yore reputedly had eighty-four temples in its heyday. In 1980, to ascertain the veracity of the legends, the Archaeological Survey of India carried out an intensive exploration nearby. The efforts paid handsome dividends with the discovery of eighteen ancient mounds, concealing temple remains under aeons of dust.

The following year, the department started excavating the largest of the Shatdhara group of mounds located east of the Western Group of Temples. The excavation which continued intermittently till 1989, opened up a new tourist spot, and substantiated the prevalent folklore. Besides, the antecedent creative endeavours of the Pratihara period were once again brought to light. The excavations also revealed the presence of a triple shrine with a common *mandapa* and *pradakshina patha* (circumambulatory path). Important antiquities recovered include sculptures of Mahishasuramardini, Vamana, Yamuna, figurines of bulls, gamesmen, discs, etc. Interestingly, the site, as indicated by the archaeological remains, showed a continuous occupation for more than three hundred years.

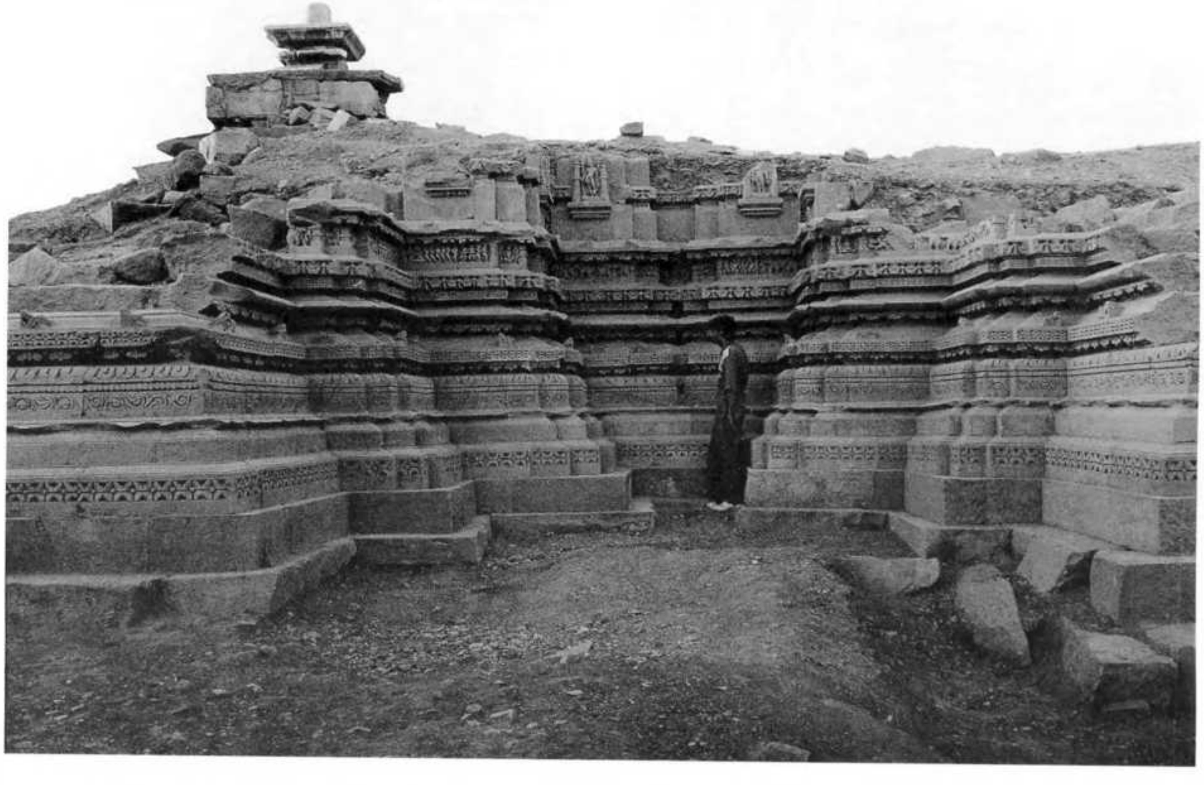
Subsequently, in March 1999, the largest mound of the area around Khajuraho, known as Bijamandala, was brought under the spade. This mound, also known as Vaidyanath, is located about 4 km south-southeast of the Western Group of Temples. However, in spite of the remoteness of the Bijamandala mound from the hub of temple town planning, it was discerned as covering a large temple (figure 1).

The mound surmounted by a small platform of coarse dressed stone is capped by a broken marble *yonipatta* pedestal with enshrined marble Shivalinga. The excavation was started on all four sides of the *yonipatta* platform. During the process, carving chips of the architectural fragments in the topmost soil layer were encountered. This veneering layer also contained much cobble, broken architectural fragments, and mutilated pieces of sculpture. Beneath this layer, huge block stones were found laid edge to edge forming foundational members of the pillars supporting the *mahamandapa*.

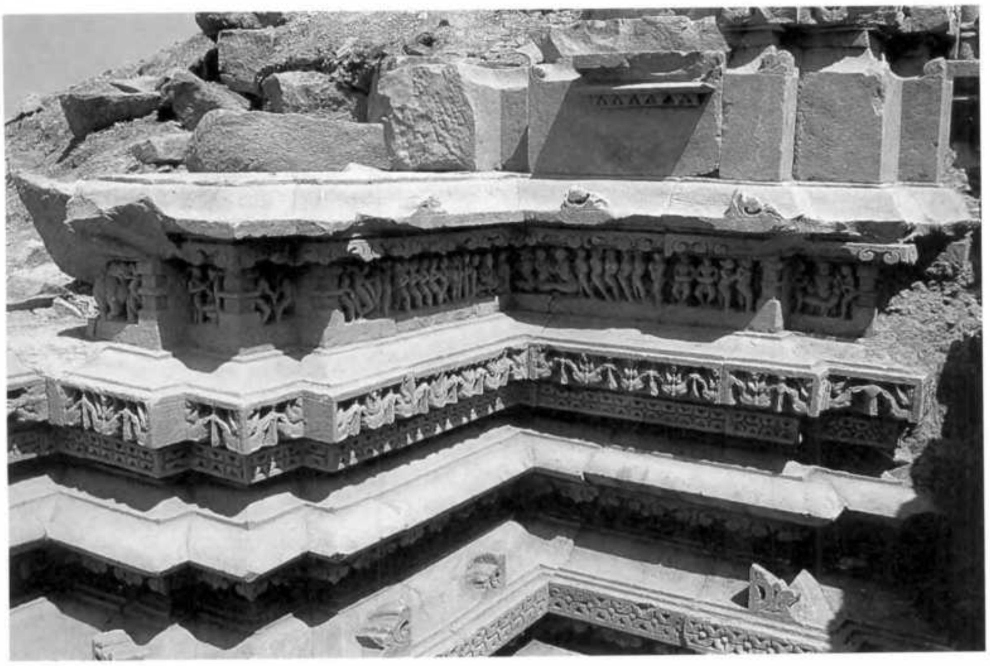
After exposing the moderately undulating top portion of the mound, the sides were taken up. And, true to expectation, a sequence of intricately carved mouldings was revealed (figures 2 and 3). The entire architecture, consisting of the *garbhagriha* (sanctum), *antarala* (vestibule), *mahamandapa* (large hall),



1
General view of the Bijamandala mound before excavation. Photograph courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.



2
Bijamandala temple: view from the south, of mouldings of the *antarala*. Photograph courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.



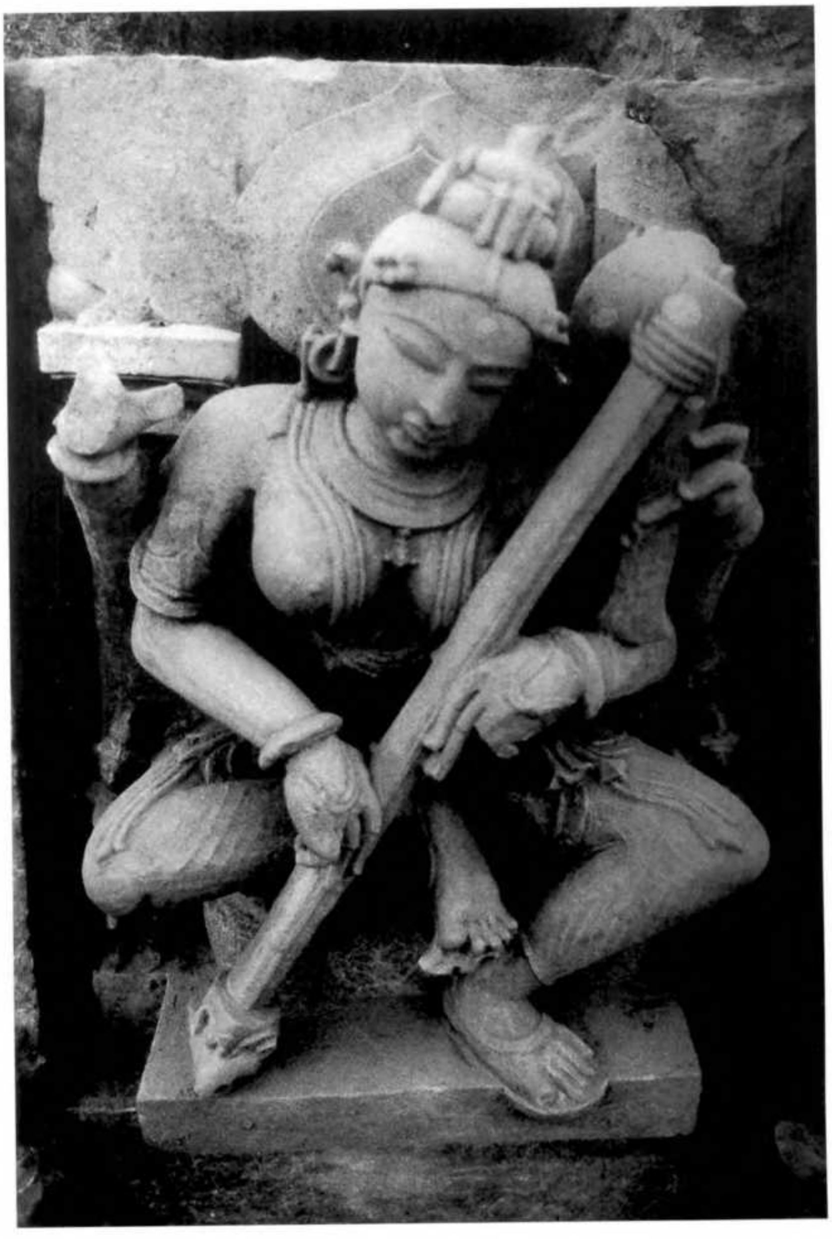
3
Bijamandala temple: detail of carved mouldings. Photograph courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.

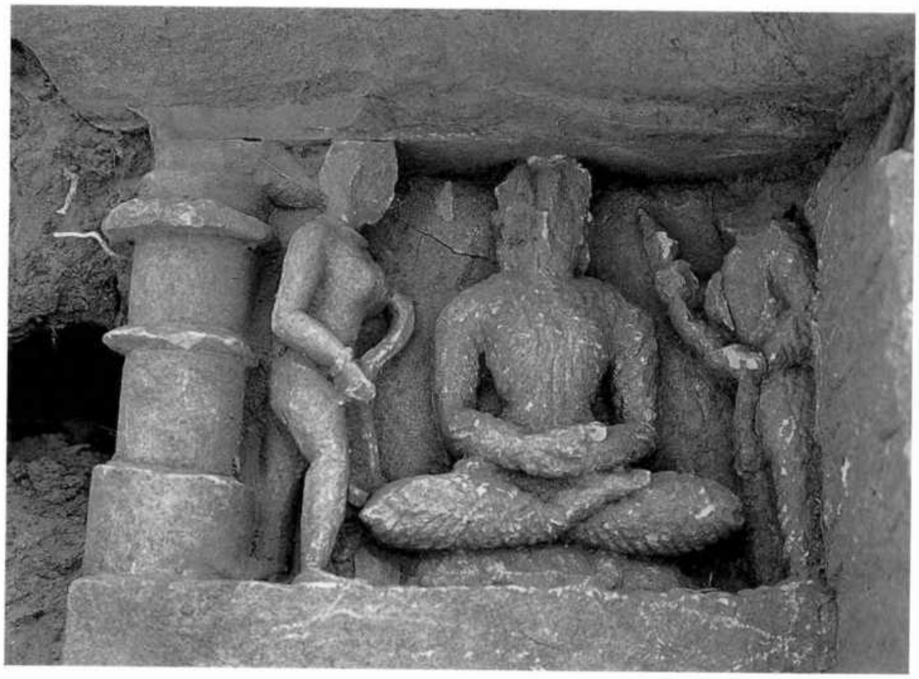
4
Sarasvati, Bijamandala temple. Photograph courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.

mandapa (hall), and *ardhamandapa* (porch), could be discerned from the maze of partly excavated structures revealed initially. The extant remains observed belong to the *pitha* and *adhisthana* mouldings of the temple. The lowest of these rest on coarsely dressed blocks, intended to remain under the soil. Above the roughly chiselled blocks are mouldings of *kharasila, bhitta* with friezes of floral motifs, *karnika,* ornamented *kumbha, jadya kumbha, grasapatti,* and *antarapatta.* A single course of large blocks over the *antarapatta,* bereft of ornamentation, is unusual in terms of architectural canons.

Naturally, sculptures of various gods were also found within the debris besides the few still clinging to the shrine. The most exquisite was the Sarasvati (figure 4) on the southern façade of the *mandapa.* Another sculpture with a *jatamukuta* type headdress, like that of Shiva, strangely has its upper hands holding lotus buds. Among the conspicuous sculptures found amidst the debris are figures of Vishnu, divine couples, amorous couples, *apsaras,* Jain tirthankaras, and griffins.

An analysis of the sculptures revealed that these could be bracketed in three time phases.





5
Jain tirthankara, Bijamandala temple. Photograph courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.

Some of the sculptures are anterior to the building of the temple, most of them are coeval with it and a few sculptures are of later times bearing definite traces of Kalachuri influence. Incidentally, many sculptures, such as those of Ganesha, an *apsara*, and some demigods, were found in the debris, in a semi-carved state. Even in the mouldings some sculptures are seen in partially carved state. Interestingly, a Jain tirthankara has a fully sculpted attendant on his left, whereas the tirthankara himself and the person on the right were yet to be given finishing touches (figure 5). Evidently, the carvings were carried out from left to right and sometimes the finishing touches were given at the destination, when for reasons unknown the activities were stopped.

It appears from the remnants of the structure that – although building of the temple was taken up as the most ambitious project ever during the later part of the tenth century or early eleventh century CE – the gigantic endeavour dragged on for many decades, albeit unsuccessfully. However, the *garbhagriha* had reached its culmination. The architectural scheme, from *mahamandapa* to *ardhamandapa*, was in the process of being built upon, as seen by the presence of semi-carved sculptures and remains of a ramp leading to the temple. Later, perhaps due to dwindling resources, the work began to flag and was finally abandoned. It is in this later phase that sculptures of earlier temple ruins were also collected, to be placed within this shrine.

The excavation thus brought to light the Bijamandala temple as the largest temple conceived at Khajuraho, being 4 m longer than Kandariya Mahadeva. Besides the physical significance of a monument exposed for the tourist, investigations suggest the changes in politico-religious and socio-economic conditions of that period. At the same time the site has raised questions of whether assimilative tendencies led to the carving of Jain tirthankaras in a Shaivite temple, or whether subsequent to abandonment by the Jain community, the sanctity of the place was maintained as a Shaivite shrine. It is however too early to comment, as inferences from the sixteen mounds which are yet to be excavated will definitely yield further hitherto unknown facts. This jigsaw puzzle of the past requires to be seen in its entirety. Till then, questions will remain part of the aura of Khajuraho.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW FIND AT KHAJURAHO: GAHAPATI KOKKALA'S VAIDYANATHA TEMPLE?

Devangana Desai

The exposition of the Bijamandala (Vaidyanatha) mound by the Archaeological Survey of India during March 1999 brings out a well-carved plinth of a large temple – the longest and also the broadest so far seen at Khajuraho (figures 1 and 2). Its dimensions suggest that it was the largest temple of Khajuraho, larger than the grand Kandariya Mahadeva. Recently part of a *jagati* (platform) has also been exposed.

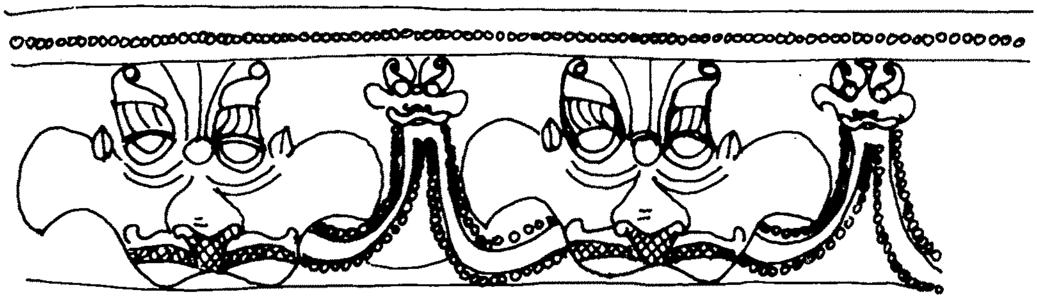
How far is the new find significant?

On plan, the Bijamandala temple consisted of the five units of a mature Khajuraho temple: *garbhagriha* (sanctum), *antarala* (vestibule), *mahamandapa* (large hall), *mandapa* (hall), *mukhamandapa* or *ardhamandapa* (porch). Like the Kandariya Mahadeva, its sanctum has a *sapta-ratha* design, seven projections on its plan. It was a *sandhara* temple, with inner space for *pradakshina* (circumambulation). Only four other temples of Khajuraho are *sandhara*, namely, Lakshmana, Parshvanatha, Vishvanatha, and Kandariya Mahadeva.

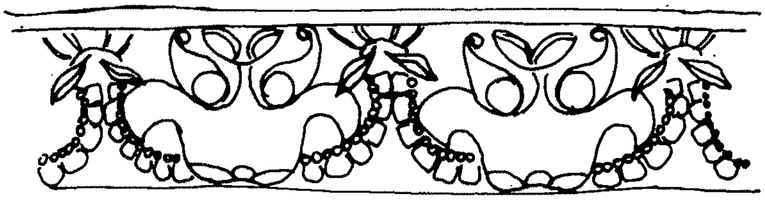
Its *jangha* (wall) and superstructure are missing, creating a doubt whether the temple was completed at all. But in the remains so far exposed, we can see some architectural elements of the *shikhara*. There is a handsome sculpture of an elephant, carved in the round, now lying in the shed, which could have decorated the superstructure on the balcony of the temple, as in the case of the Vishvanatha and the Kandariya Mahadeva. There are also broken pieces of *amalakas*. Large-sized sculptures of *apsaras, dikpalas* (guardians of space), and *vyalas* (griffins) lie amidst the assembled sculptures in the shed near the ASI office in Khajuraho. They must have adorned the *jangha* portion of the temple. However, we expect many more sculptures from a temple of such large proportions. Where are the images of the cardinal niches? Where is the door lintel? Further exposition by the ASI will answer many questions.

Dating the Temple

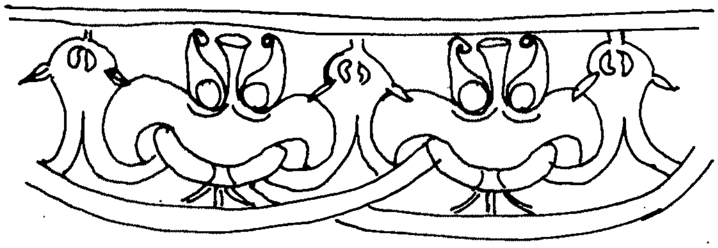
Was this temple earlier or later in date than the Kandariya Mahadeva temple (circa 1030 CE)? To date it, I compared its sculptured mouldings of the plinth with those of the Kandariya, Devi Jagadamba, and Chitragupta (circa 1000–1020 CE), and the Vishvanatha (999 CE). A comparison with the *kirtimukhas* of the *grasa-pattika* row in these temples (see figures 6a–c) shows that the Bijamandala is earlier than the Kandariya Mahadeva, and is nearer the Devi Jagadamba and the Chitragupta temples. Also, there is a figure of a *surasundari*, with tiered hairstyle, holding a manuscript, now in the shed near the ASI office. Interestingly, the



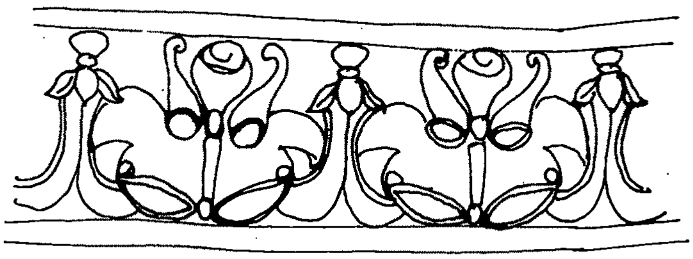
Lakshmana temple



Vishvanatha temple

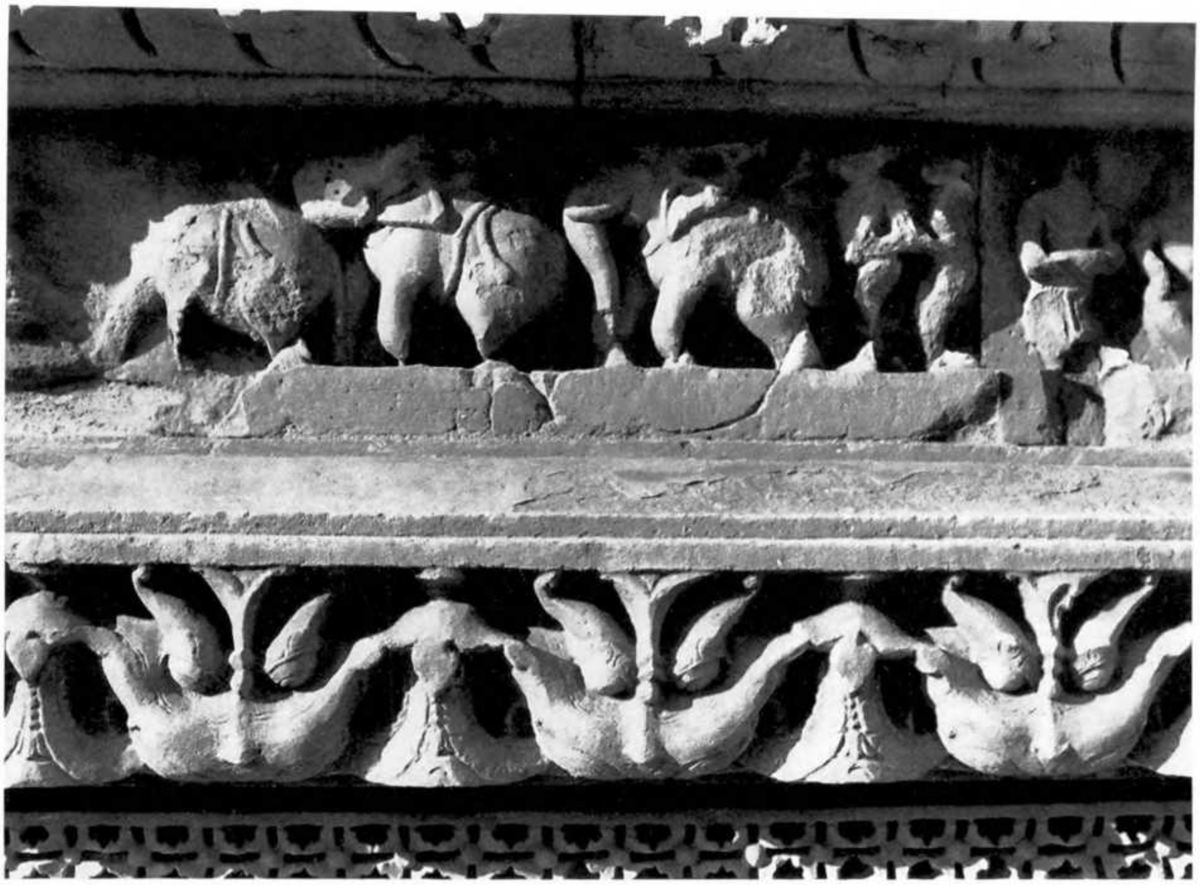


Kandariya Mahadeva temple

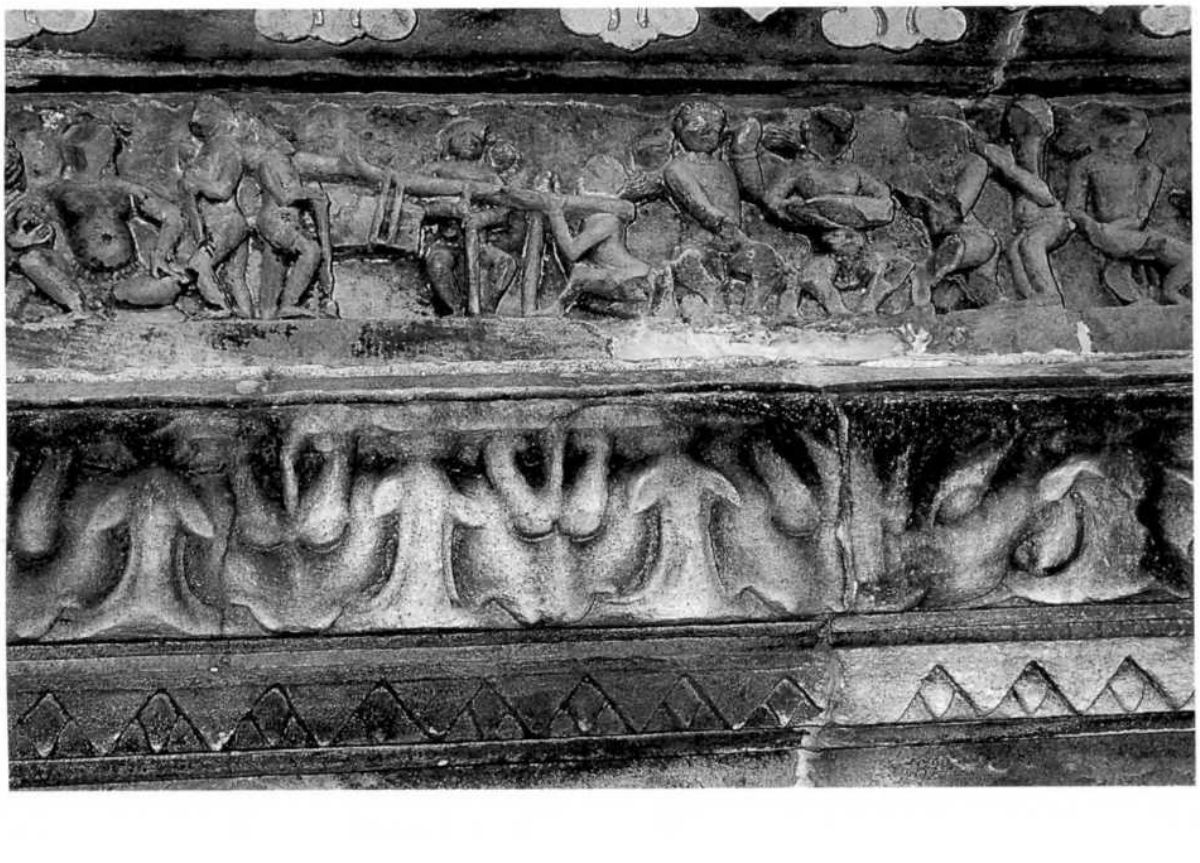


Bijamandala temple

6a
Drawing of *kirtimukha* (face of glory) bands on the plinths of the Lakshmana, Vishvanatha, Kandariya Mahadeva, and Bijamandala temples of Khajuraho. By Sheril Castelino, courtesy Franco-Indian Research, Mumbai.



6b
Kirtimukha and *antarapatta* bands, Vishvanatha temple. Photograph: Aniruddha Kudalkar, courtesy Franco-Indian Research, Mumbai.



6c
Kirtimukha and *antarapatta* bands, Chitragupta temple, Khajuraho. Photograph: Devangana Desai.

manuscript bears letters in Devanagari, reading "*Shri Vidya[dhara?]deva*". This type of short inscription is seen in several sculptures of the Devi Jagadamba and Vishvanatha temples, but is less common on the Kandariya and later temples. The niched standing, four-armed male deities on the *vedibandha* (row) of the Bijamandala remind us of the similar figures on the Chitragupta temple. On the Vishvanatha and the Kandariya, this place is occupied by *mithunas* (couples), and the *madhya-bandha* (central projecting band) is decorated with stencilled scrolls. In the Bijamandala temple the *madhya-bandha* consists of *grasa-pattika* or *kirtimukha* design, as in the case of the earlier Lakshmana temple.

I noticed some etchings of fish design on the plinths of both the Kandariya and the Bijamandala, indicating that some of the artists could be common to both these temples. But there are many more etched designs on the Kandariya, which are not seen at the Bijamandala. Also there are several loose sculptures found from the mound which reveal late features of double *mekhalas* or girdle-bands.

The graceful image of Sarasvati in a niche of the *mandapa* of the Bijamandala temple is incomplete on its left side (figure 4). The *vyala-mukha* of the *vina* (musical instrument), is distinctly carved. The ornaments in the form of plain bands worn by the goddess are similar to those of some of the sculptures of the Kandariya, because they are unfinished. The details of the ornaments were yet to be filled in. Her headdress is similar to that of the Sarasvati in the *antarala* niche of the Chitragupta (see this author's *Religious Imagery of Khajuraho*, 1996, photo 74).

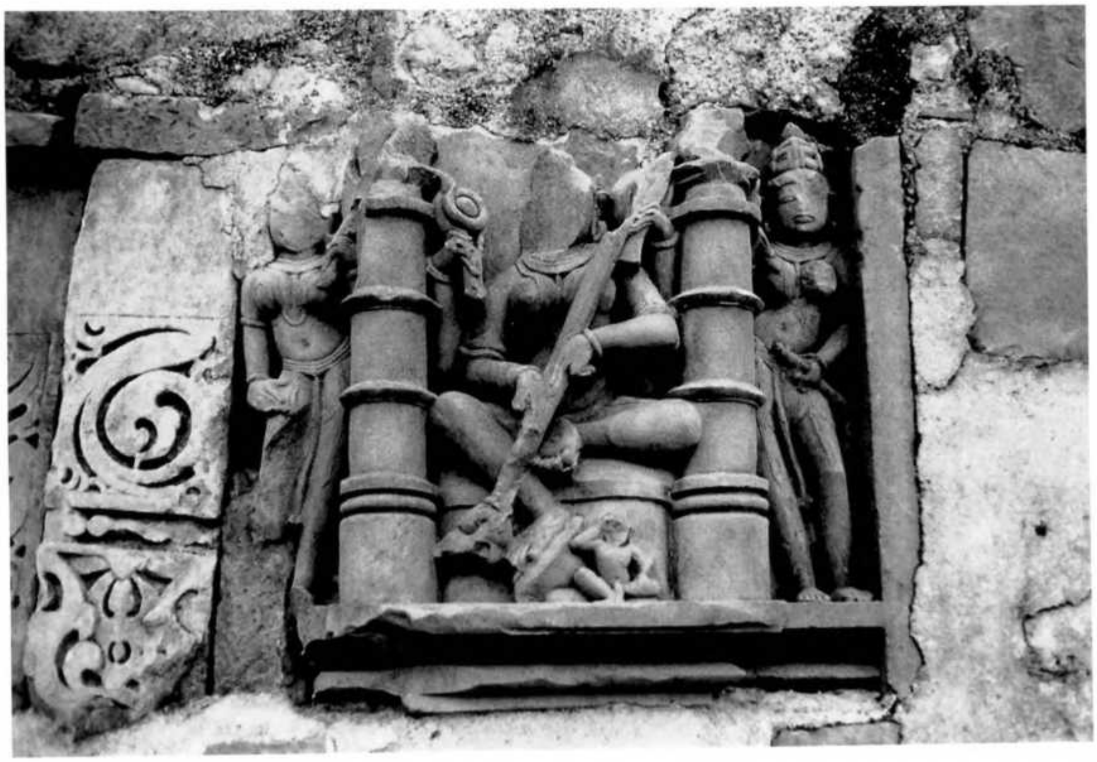
A sculpture of Sarasvati (figure 7), now embedded in the *jagati* of the Kandariya Mahadeva, however, does not possess such charm. There is another Sarasvati of slightly earlier date, in the Archaeological Museum (open-air collection), and in a vestibule niche of the Vishvanatha temple (figure 8). Sarasvati images are seen at Khajuraho on most of the temples: Lakshmana (Vaikuntha-Vishnu), Parshvanatha (Jain), Vishvanatha (Shiva), Chitragupta (Surya), and are not associated with any particular cult.

What is peculiar about the Bijamandala Sarasvati is that the goddess sits with her right leg bent and left pendant, a rare posture seen at Khajuraho. Brahma's consort, when in the company of her husband, sits in this posture, but no other image of Sarasvati or any other goddess is seen with the right leg bent. Most of the figures seated in *lalitasana* have their left leg bent and right pendant.

Small figures of Jain tirthankaras are seen in both the Vishvanatha (figure 9) and the Devi Jagadamba (originally dedicated to Vishnu) on the *rajasenaka* row of their balconies. A (half finished) Jina figure is carved on the *antarapatta* row of the Bijamandala temple (figure 5). This row also displays dynamic figures of dancers, couples, warriors, elephants, and an interesting array of scenes (figure 3). Elephants are a favourite theme. *Acharyas* (teachers) seated and attended by disciples is another theme seen here, common with the *antarapatta* rows of the Vishvanatha and Chitragupta temples.

While talking to local people, I learnt that the Bijamandala (Bijamatha) mound derived its name from Vaidyanatha (Vaidya...Baidya... Baija...Bija). The mound is associated with Vaidyanatha, Shiva the healer. The marble linga, now on top of the *garbhagriha* portion, is said to have been installed in the temple in the nineteenth century by the Chhatarpur Maharaja Pratap Singh. The nearby village Jatkari received its name from *jatis* or sages, who stayed there.

One question which comes to mind is: could it be the lost Vaidyanatha temple built by Gahapati Kokkala, mentioned in the inscribed slab dated 1001 CE(VS 1058)? This inscription of twenty-two lines in Sanskrit, one of the three



7
Sculpture of Sarasvati, now in the platform of the Kandariya Mahadeva temple. Photograph: Aniruddha Kudalkar, courtesy Franco-Indian Research, Mumbai.

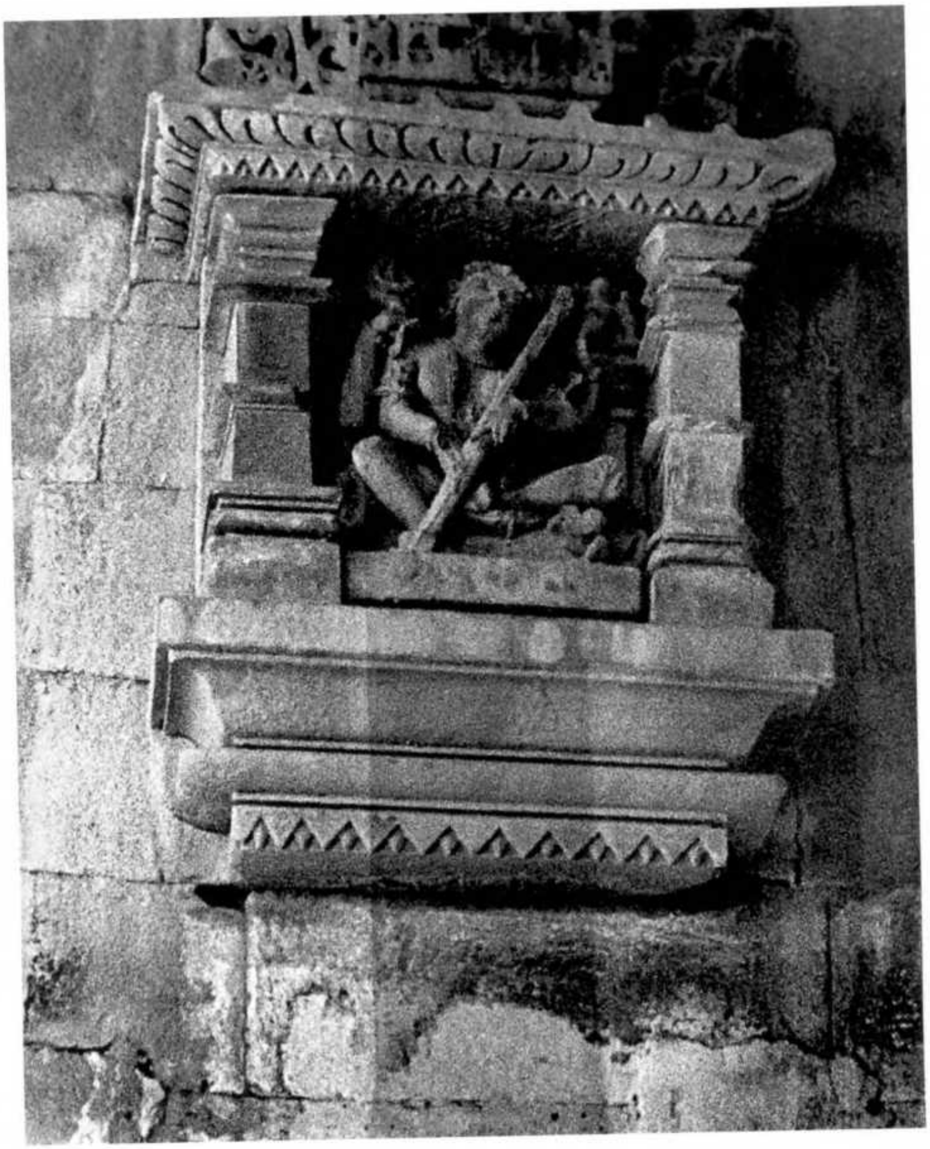
8
Sculpture of Sarasvati in the vestibule niche, Vishvanatha temple. Photograph: Devangana Desai.

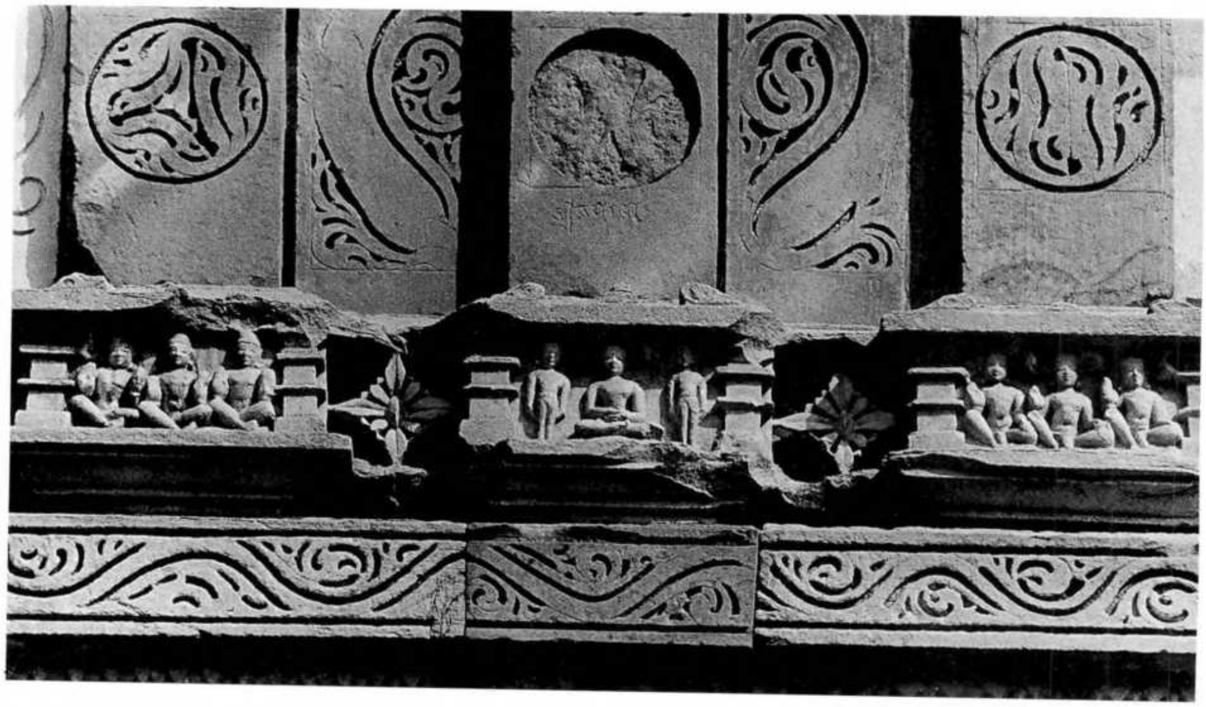
major epigraphs of Khajuraho, states that Kokkala of the Gahapati family built a grand temple for Shiva Vaidyanatha, and also got pious Brahmins well-versed in the Vedas to settle in the vicinity. According to F. Kielhorn, writing in *Epigraphia Indica*, Volume I, in 1892, the slab bearing Kokkala's inscription "is said to have been found about fifty years ago at the temple of Vaidyanatha, at Khajuraho".

Which is this Vaidyanatha temple of Kokkala? Where is it located?

The inscribed slab was not noticed by Captain T.S. Burt, the British engineer, who first reported the Western Group of Khajuraho temples in 1838, and also took an impression of the inscribed slab of King Dhanga's Vishvanatha temple, dated 999 CE. Perhaps the Vaidyanatha temple of Gahapati Kokkala was not built in the Western Group. Captain Burt does not mention any temple of this name among the seven temples he saw at Khajuraho.

But between 1843 and 1847, the Chhatarpur Maharaja Pratap Singh carried out extensive repairs on the Khajuraho temples, and it is very likely that at this time he brought the





9
Jina figures in the central panel of the *rajasenaka* row, Vishvanatha temple. Photograph: Devangana Desai.

inscribed slab from the Vaidyanatha temple (now the Bijamandala mound in the southern zone) to the western complex. That the Maharaja had visited this temple near Jatkari village is clear from the fact that he installed here a marble Shivalinga, now seen at the top of the mound (figure 1). In 1865, Major General Cunningham noticed two inscribed slabs, one of 999 CE and the other of 1001 CE, standing loose in the porch of the Vishvanatha temple in the western complex. He writes: "As the earlier record was the only inscription seen by Burt in 1838, I conclude that it most possibly belongs to the [Vishvanatha] temple." (*Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, Volume II, p. 423, and XXI, p. 66, Plate XIX). Later both these inscriptions, of King Dhanga and Gahapati Kokkala, were built into the side wall of the porch of the Vishvanatha temple, facing each other, the position in which we see them even today.

It is significant that the invocatory verse in the Vaidyanatha temple inscription beautifully captures the conception of Shiva as the all-embracing deity who combines in himself Vamana (Vishnu), Buddha, and Jina. (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 150). This possibly helps us to understand the presence of Jain figures in the Bijamandala mound.

The importance of the Bijamandala (Vaidyanatha) temple consists in its huge proportions, it being so far the largest known temple of Khajuraho. Second, its location in the southern zone of the site indicates that areas other than the western zone, associated with the large monuments of the Chandella royal family, also had grand temples. Third, if it can definitely be proved that *this was the Vaidyanatha temple built by Gahapati Kokkala*, then we have at Bijamandala the remains of the lost Vaidyanatha temple whose inscription we knew earlier but whose actual whereabouts were unknown. If this hypothesis is correct, then the exposition of the Bijamandala becomes a great find, which restores to Khajuraho its lost inscribed temple.

The ASI will, I am sure, take up further work on the site which will answer a number of queries that the exposition of the temple has raised. Tomorrow, even if it is proved that this is not the Vaidyanatha temple of Kokkala, the big question still will be: where is the temple bearing one of the three major inscriptions of Khajuraho? Is it lying within the other mounds still to be excavated?

THE SPLENDOURS OF WOOD-CARVING IN VASO HAVELI, NORTH GUJARAT

V.S. Pramar

Gujarat is well known for its traditional handicrafts, especially textiles, embroidery, jewellery, and stone-carving, but it is less well known for its equally outstanding wood-carving. Most of these wood-carvings are found in domestic architecture: in entrance doors, balconies, columns, struts, and ceilings. To possess a house with wood-carving was once considered a status symbol, and Gujarat still has many surviving dwellings ranging from the simple house to the rich mansion (haveli) adorned with beautiful wood-carvings.

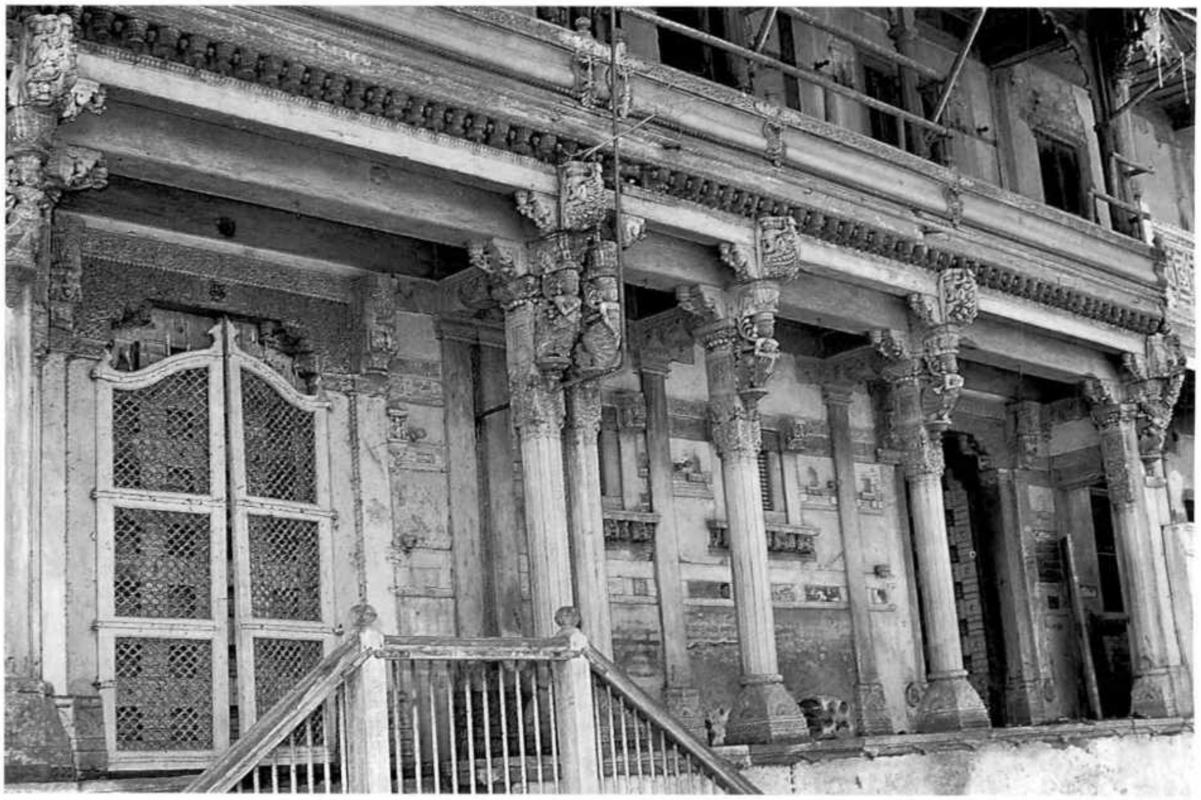
However, this rich architectural woodwork is not found uniformly throughout Gujarat but varies with region. Saurashtra has buildings mostly in stone with sparse use of wood; south Gujarat, with its predominantly tribal background, is rich in woodwork but poor in wood-carving; thus, it is north Gujarat, the principal region of ancient trade and commerce, which displays the finest carvings in its abundant use of wood. When, therefore, reference is here made to woodwork it has to be understood in the context of north Gujarat alone. This extensive use of wood in a region lacking in natural timber is a peculiarity which cannot be analysed here but the tradition is centuries old.

The term haveli is of Persian derivation and was used to designate the large residential mansion of a wealthy family. Most havelis were constructed by urban merchants and administrators, but they retained the traditional planning of the typical rural house with minor modifications. To understand this, it is necessary to begin with some description of the basic rural system of planning.

The typical rural dwelling always formed part of a row, and two facing rows enclosed a large common space closed at one end by a wall and guarded at the other by an entrace gateway which was kept shut at night for security. This kind of cul-de-sac grouping was called a *khadki*, and a number of similar *khadkis* collectively made up the village. The whole system was designed to provide security against marauders common in the past, and the same system was carried over into towns and cities with minor modifications. Here a number of smaller *khadkis* were interconnected via their common spaces which became lanes through which traffic could pass, and this large residential colony was now guarded by a single entrance gateway which served all the inner *khadkis*; this settlement pattern was called a *pol*. The older central parts of Ahmedabad, for example, are a maze of such *khadkis* and *pols*. It will be obvious that in this system houses had to occupy uniform plots and have uniform plans, and the haveli achieved its greater size by occupying two to four plots but still retaining the traditional kind of planning as we shall see.

The typical rural dwelling was a two-storeyed structure, with three spaces aligned in depth on the ground floor: a large rear room (*ordo*), a smaller room in front (*parsal*), and a front veranda (*otlo*); while the first floor was a single large space under the tiled roof. This two-storeyed unit repeated itself to form the row, and whatever activities could not be carried out within, spilled out into the front common space. This same unit-plan was later transferred to the urban settlement but now a new problem arose. The former rural common space with its internal privacy had now become a public lane and reduced the privacy of the home. In addition, it often became necessary to receive a new class of visitors, namely clients, into the house, as part of trading and commercial activities, and there was no space to accommodate them. The solution found was to add an extra two-storeyed unit in front separated from the rear unit by an open courtyard; this front unit consisted of a single room plus veranda on the ground floor, and a single large room above. The new front unit was also called a *khadki*, and it was here that clients and formal visitors were received; it also served in some cases as a shop or workplace. This modified plan became standard for north Gujarat and also formed the core of the haveli. The greater size of the haveli was made up by simply duplicating the former rooms and spaces: the rear unit might now have three to four *ordos* with the *parsal* running the full width; the courtyard being much larger could have extra small rooms at the sides for a kitchen, water room, prayer room, toilets, etc. and the front unit also gained extra rooms and more space.

This new spaciousness gave opportunity for a change of function. The rich haveli would attract a virtually aristocratic kind of clientele or urban elite, and instead of receiving them on the ground floor open to gaze from the lane, these visitors were taken to the first floor: a single large hall running the full width of the house. This upper reception room was called a *divankhanu*, another term borrowed from Mughal practice. The *divankhanu* became, so to

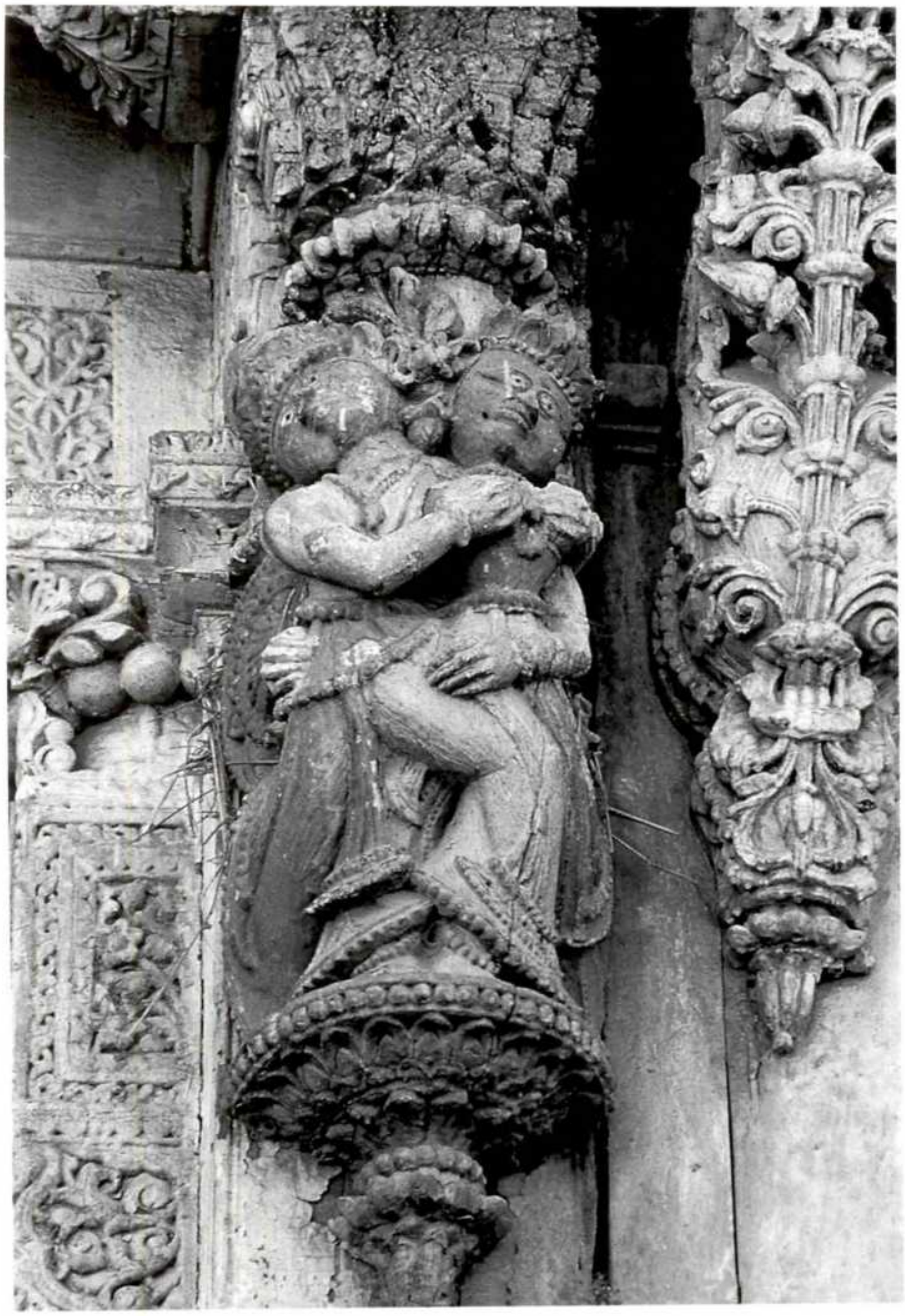


1
Vaso haveli elevation showing the typical system of columns and struts supporting the upper balcony as also the massive ground floor windows with carved frames.

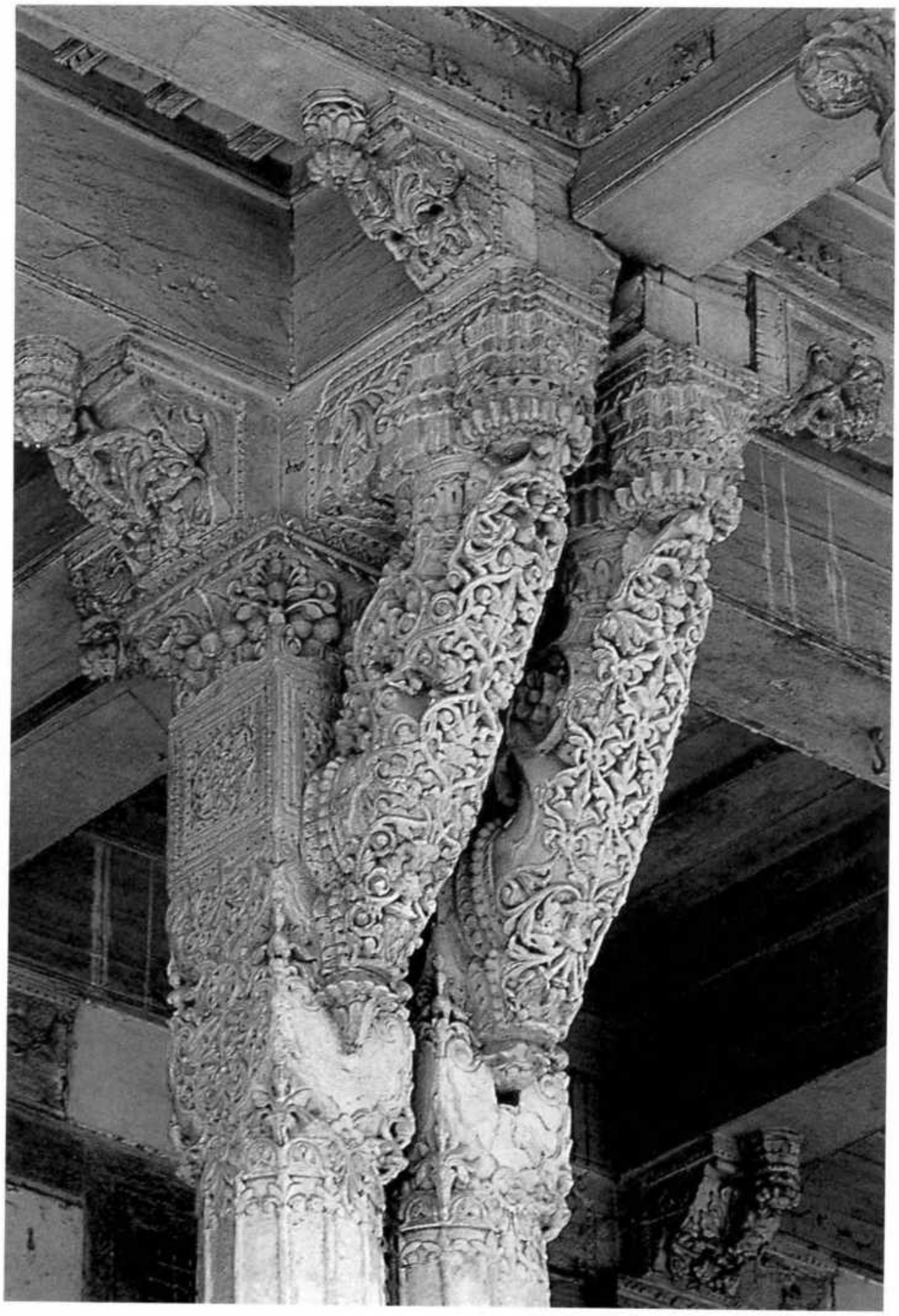
speak, the showpiece of the house. It was furnished with row windows overlooking the lane, and some even had coloured glass panes; the flooring was polished with coloured cement, the walls had decorative niches in imitation of Mughal palaces, and the ceiling was richly carved and often had imported chandeliers. Mattresses and cushions provided seating. It was in such an opulent *divankhanu* that a wealthy *nagarseth* (town mayor or chief merchant) might hold important civic gatherings or even receive feudal chiefs. When it is considered that some of the richest bankers of western India were Gujaratis, the magnificence of their havelis and *divankhanus* can well be imagined.

The Vaso haveli, by contrast, is located in the small rural town of Vaso, about 20 km from Nadiad. There are in fact two almost identical havelis built by two brothers in the years 1872–76, who belonged to a family of revenue-farmers among whom was the well-known Darbar Gopaldas. The one here described belongs to Anand Prasad Amin and has since been declared a Protected Monument by the Archaeological Survey of India. The building stands within its compound entered by a gateway, yet retains the traditional kind of planning described above. What distinguishes it from all others is the sheer scale and magnificence of its woodwork. The amount of wood used is far in excess of any structural requirements, obviously in order to provide more opportunity for a display of wood-carvings. For example, the ground floor barred windows have double cills, of which one range is made up of a series of small carved elephant heads interspersed with birds and mythical beasts. In the interior, numerous small wooden plaques have been inserted in the walls bearing carvings of peacocks, Lakshmi, Ganesha, etc. Even additional horizontal bonding timbers were inserted in walls and intricately carved. Many internal window jambs and shutters are painted with figures resembling miniatures. In fact, as in the rest of Gujarat, almost all woodwork was painted but in fairly tasteful colours, rich yet pleasing. Some of the carvings in Vaso haveli which deserve special mention are described below:

(1) The north elevation (figure 1) with the main entrance has the typical range of columns and struts supporting the upper balcony, but the struts are carved in a unique way. They are transformed into human figures bearing musical instruments – a theme also



2
One of the figural struts portraying a *mithuna* couple, rare in domestic architecture.



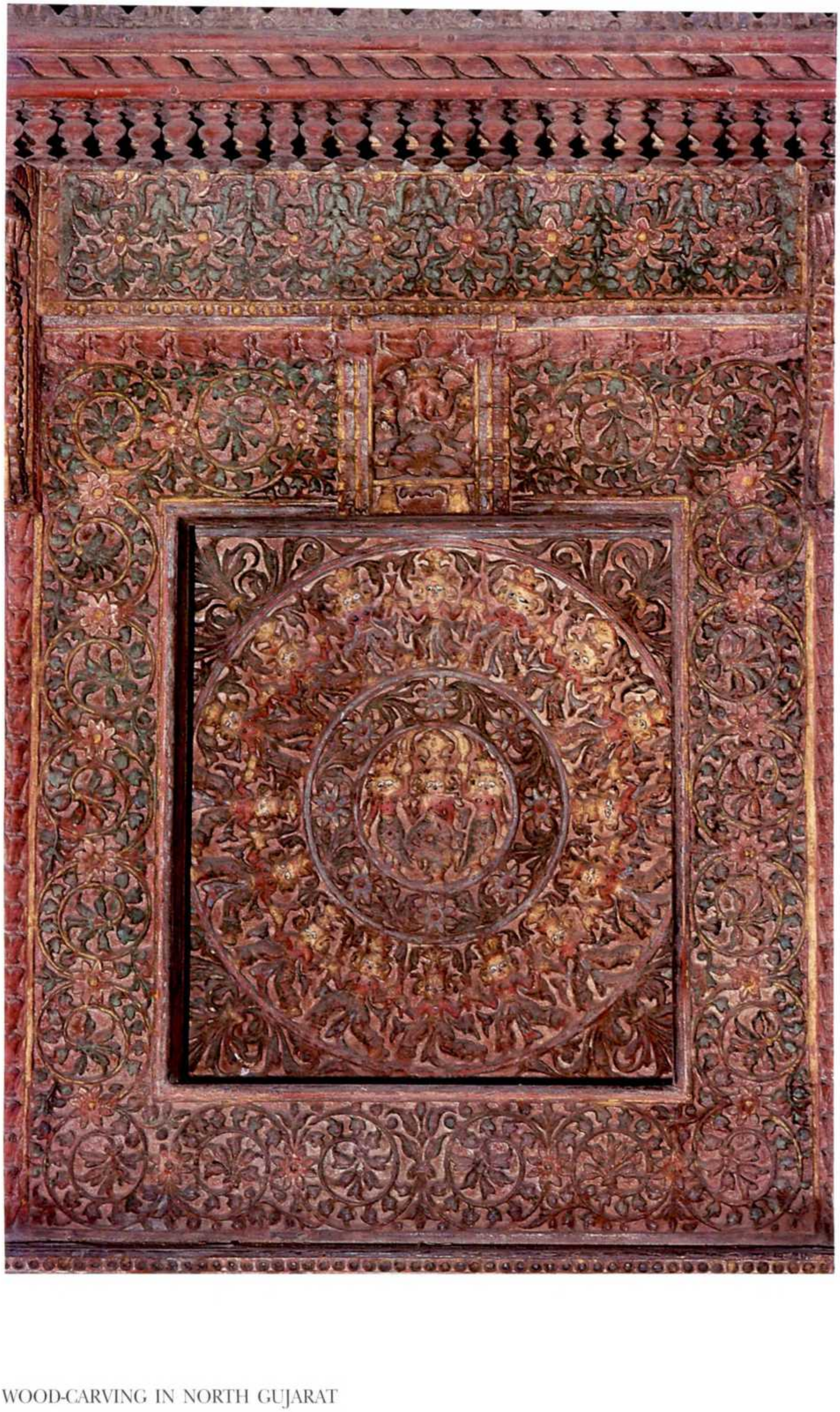
3
A variant strut carved with a floral pattern very characteristic of north Gujarat wood-carving.

found elsewhere – but here one of them is a *mithuna* motif showing a couple with entwined legs, the male figure embracing the breasts of the female (figure 2). The costumes and head-dresses all proclaim that these are not earthly beings but some heavenly creatures resembling the *vidyadharas* of temples, from which the motif seems to have been borrowed. But the stylistic treatment is entirely different: there is present a strong element of folk art in the carving and this is characteristic for all Gujarati wood-carving. It is obvious that those craftsmen who executed wood-carvings were very different from those who did temple carvings.

(2) A variant of the strut is shown in figure 3. This structural junction is not only typical for the enormous amount of wood used but also illustrates the manner in which floral motifs are used in carving the brackets, column shafts, and capitals. It is, however, noteworthy that the load-bearing parts, such as the main beams and joists, are not carved because that would weaken them. Another reason was that since all carving was done *before* construction started, to carve a heavy beam meant potential damage during transportation and erection; in other words, only the lighter structural woodwork was carved.

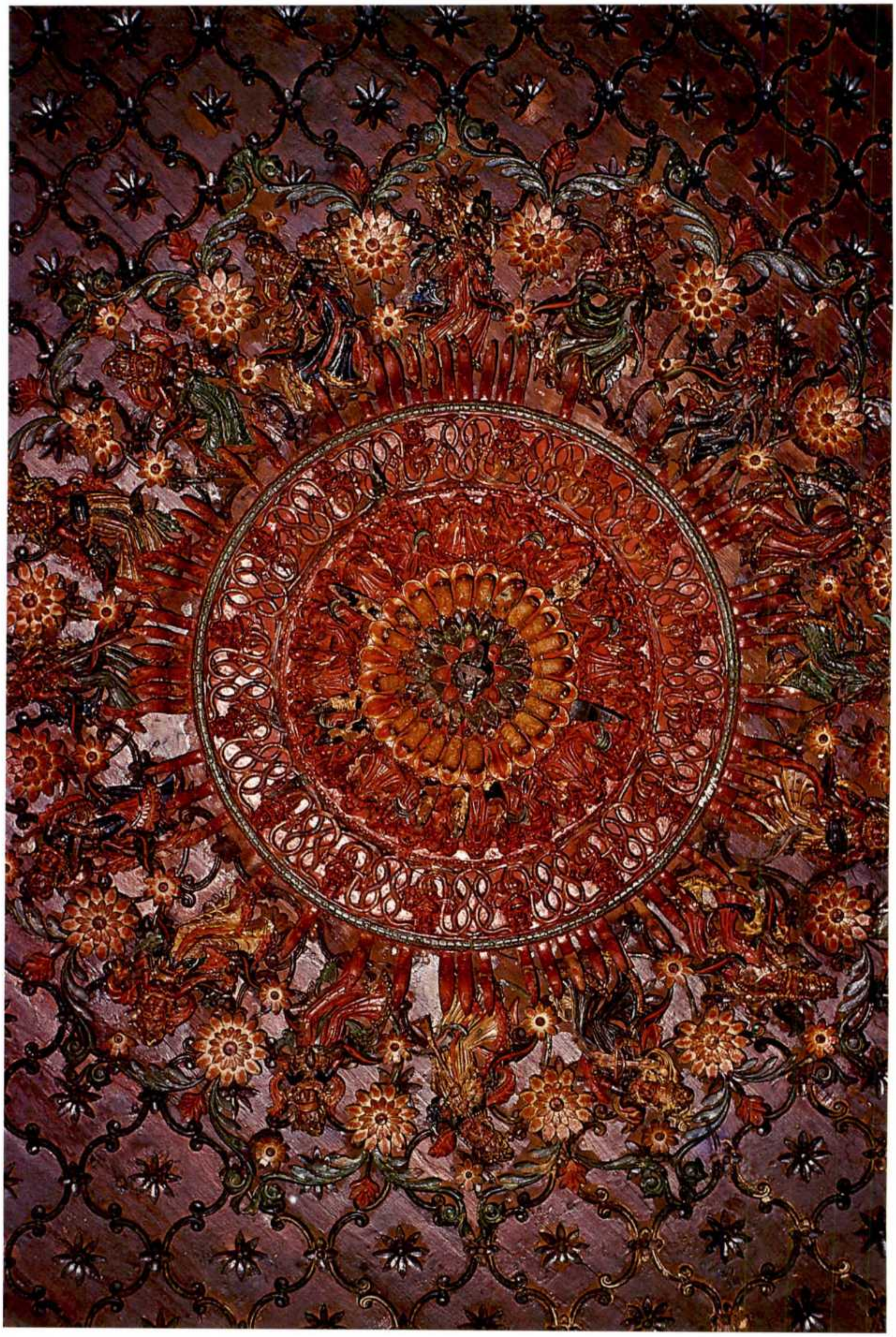
(3) As one enters and crosses over the courtyard into the inner *parsal*, one meets a wealth of woodwork consisting of carved bonding timbers, horse-headed brackets serving as pegs, a decorative shelf running overhead, and as centrepiece to the display a decorated niche or *gokhala* (figure 4). It is rather heavily over-carved with minute details which blur the design; its main features are a Ganesha on the lintel (a common motif on door lintels), jambs and cills covered with floral patterns, while the centre has circular flowered patterns surrounding a central female figure flanked by *chowri*-bearing attendants. Between the outer band and the central figures is a circular band of dancers bearing sticks, obviously performing the *dandia ras*, another theme common to Gujarat.

(4) The most magnificent part of the haveli, the *divankhanu* on the first floor, has one of the finest carved ceilings to be found anywhere. The carved flat ceiling is originally a Mughal concept, and the design invariably resembled either geometric work or floral patterns imitating carpets, and the Gujarati ceilings have borrowed the style. Here the ceiling has a geometric pattern interposed with

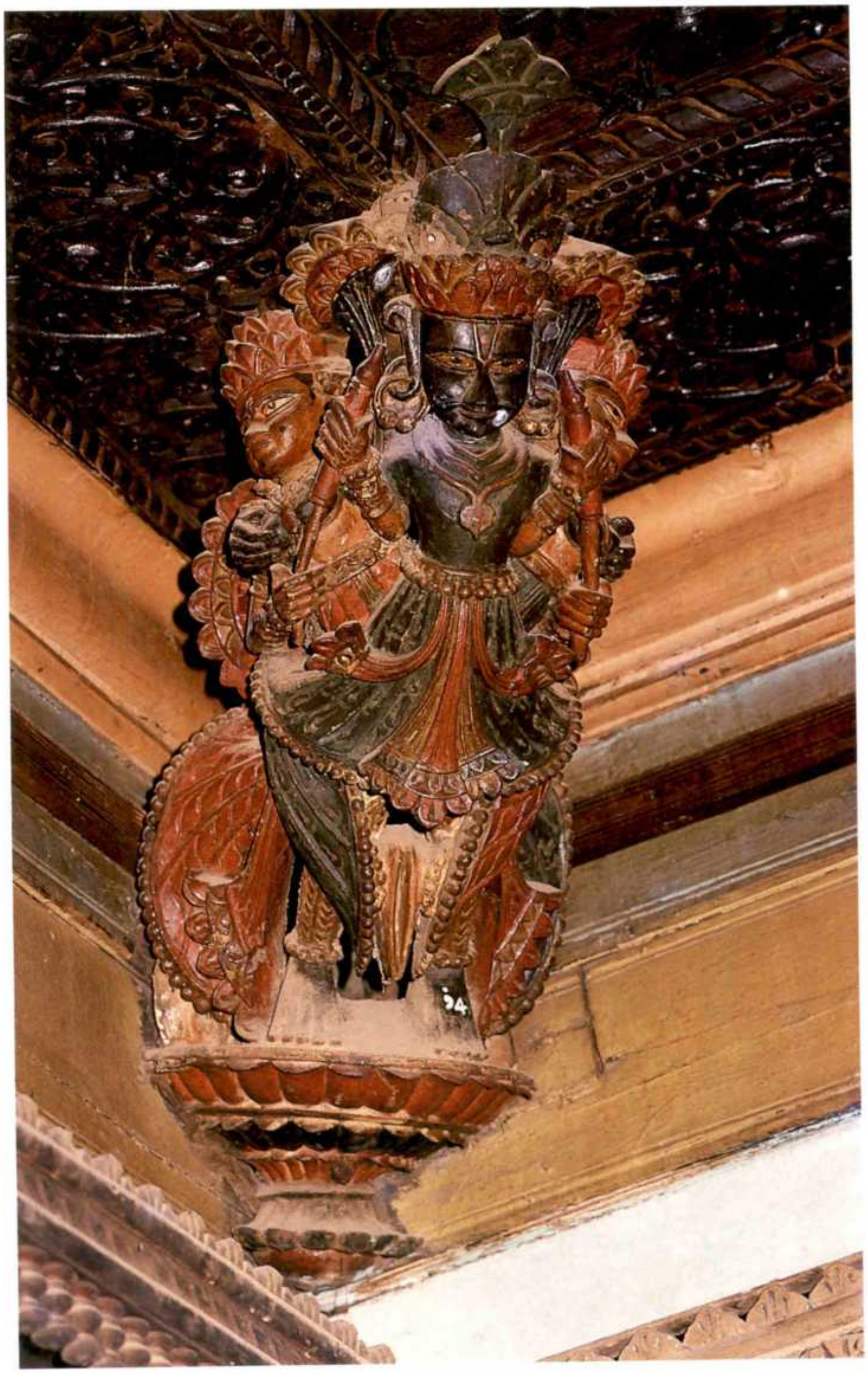


4
A carved decorative niche from the inner *parsal* depicting floral wreaths, a ring of dancers performing the *dandia ras*, and a central female figure flanked by attendants, with Ganesha on the lintel.

5
The magnificent carved ceiling of the upper reception chamber or *divankhanu.*



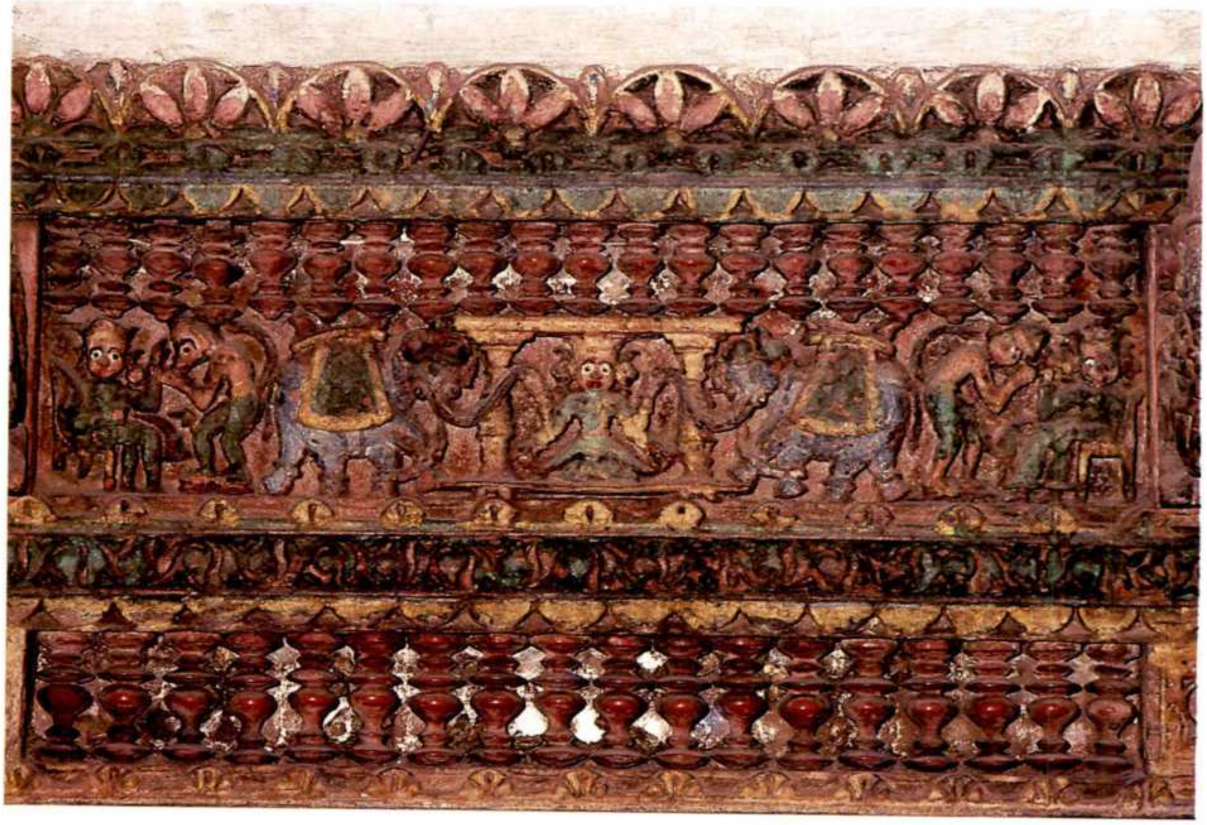
small flowers, the border has large rosettes, but the centrepiece is entirely original (figure 5). It is formed of circular concentric rings each having a different theme – musicians, dancers, entwined mythical *nagins* (half woman, half snake), raised petals of metal – while at the centre is a hanging pendant of carved leaves. The first circle around the pendant has divine figures alternately male and female, the males bearing maces, the females whisks, all dressed in flaring costumes which mark them out as dancers. This motif goes back to the Saurashtrian pastoral tradition of dances performed during Navaratri by herders, and forms the basis of the dance of the *gopis*. The next ring is very curious, consisting of mythical *nagins*, with extended tails intertwined into loops, the whole forming a very elegant and original design. This is followed by a ring of petals made of metal (some have broken off); the outermost ring has divine figures with bent legs to indicate that they are flying, they are adorned with jewels and crowns and wear strange costumes of which the lower portions are a mix between a skirt and loose trousers. Here too, the figures are alternately male and female, and all bear musical instruments. A novel feature is the background made of thin sheets of mica (*abrak*), which strongly reflects light, and many of the figures stand out against it.



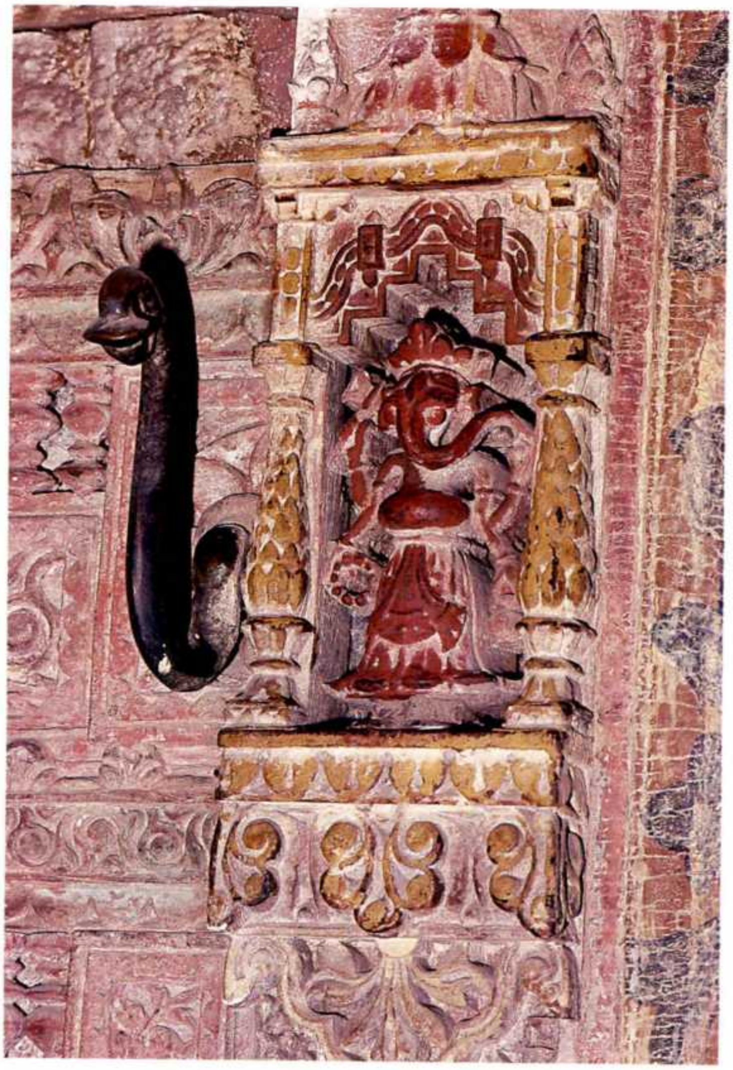
6
A corner of the reception chamber with the figure of Krishna playing Holi.

The four corners of the ceiling have figural compositions which seem to have been an after-thought: they are carved in the round and do not integrate well into the background. They are about 90 cm high and represent different aspects of the Krishna legend: in three scenes he stands with hands and arms linked to flanking females as if in dance, while the fourth portrays him playing Holi (figure 6).

(5) Among the minor carvings two examples may be mentioned. One is a carved bonding timber depicting a composite scene



7
A carved bonding timber with a composite theme.



8
One of the numerous wooden carved plaques found on the ground floor: here Ganesha stands within a shrine whose columns are carved into cypresses.

(figure 7). At centre is a seated Lakshmi flanked by elephants pouring water over her, and to her left and right are two identical scenes of Hanuman bowing before a seated figure of Rama. Rows of droplets (very common in Gujarati carving) form bands above and below, set against a shiny *abrak* background, and the top is finished by a floral strip. The other carving is a plaque showing Ganesha set within a shrine (figure 8).

In conclusion it must be added that both the *havelis* at Vaso, had they been situated in any other country, would have been considered national treasures. India, with its plethora of royal monuments, tends to neglect domestic architecture and this is a great pity.

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
All photographs are by the author.

PORTRAIT OF MUKTAMBAL, SWORDWIFE OF SARFOJI II

Ramaa Narayanan

The southern Maratha court at Tanjavur (1675–1855) encouraged the arts, and the period was marked by a synthesis of traditions. The paintings of the Tanjavur Marathas reflect Mughal-Deccani, late Vijayanagara-Nayaka, and European traditions.

The Maratha kings of Tanjavur married according to custom, taking their brides from the Maratha communities including those from Pune, Satara, and Kolhapur, while they took any number of concubines from outside their community. According to the Modi Records of the Tanjavur Palace (of which Tamil translations are available at the Sarasvati Mahal Library), the Maratha kings, especially Sarfoji II, and Shivaji of Tanjavur, gave many of their concubines legitimacy through a marriage ritual called *kadga vivaha.* The concubines of Mangala Vilas or Mangalavasam (the seraglio) were established in Kalyana Mahal on the palace premises.

The portrait of a lady – who may be identified with Muktambal – in the British Museum, London, was probably personally commissioned by Sarfoji II (1798–1833), the penultimate ruler of the Tanjavur Marathas. Muktambal was his swordwife,[1] and the sister of Chinnanna and Perianna, the much revered Telugu-speaking ministers of the Nayudu caste, in Sarfoji's court. The relationship between Muktambal and Sarfoji II is aptly demonstrated in the *Bhonsle Vamsavali:*

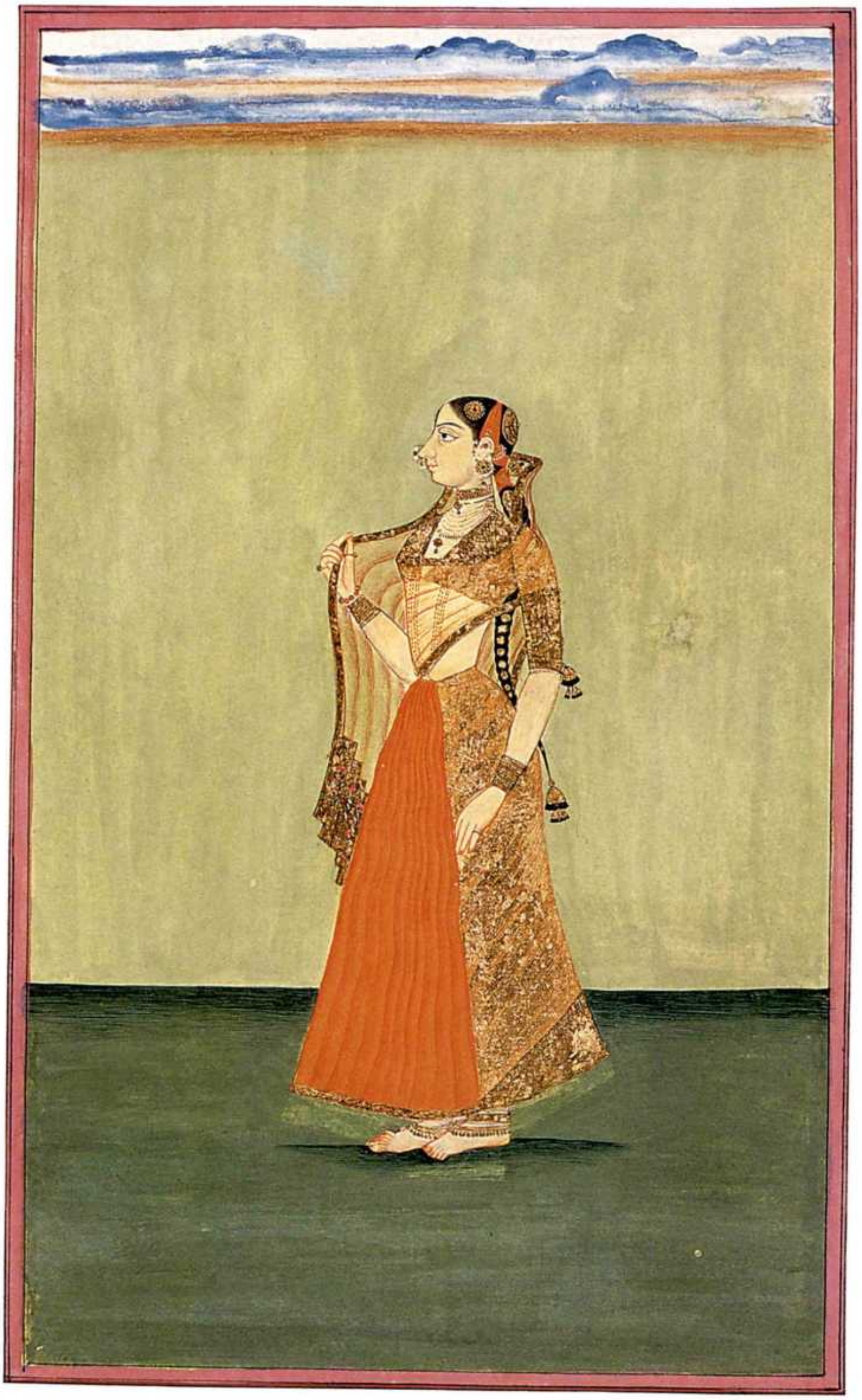
> Sarabhoji [Sarfoji] had taken a concubine of all good virtues even before his marriage. They were highly compatible and she herself died in the second child-birth. The death of this most virtuous lady saddened the heart of the king. She had requested [the] Maharaja, a chatram be built in her name. [The] Raja conceded ... named it Muktambalpuram and made arrangement for the safe and good upkeep of the same as [a] permanent memorial of [the] lady.[2]

Similar information is available from the Mackenzie Plates 3180,[3] which further refers to Muktambal as "*rupashali-gunashali*" (beautiful and virtuous). It gives an account of Muktambal's last wish for the founding of a *chatram* in her name, and Sarfoji fulfilling her wish and setting up other useful establishments like an *agraharam,* a temple, a tank, and a park in addition. The *chatram* had in-house doctors to treat sick travellers, according to a letter of 1801 from Sarfoji II to the Resident.[4]

The portrait of Muktambal could at first glance be identified as a miniature from north India. In fact, it is a provincial and stray example of a miniature from the southern Maratha court at Tanjavur. The catalogue records it as "A Lady, South India, Late 18th century AD".

This effective composition depicts Muktambal as a young woman clad in a skirt, choli, and half-sari, an unusual costume that came into vogue in the twentieth century. She stands in profile, holding the free end of her half-sari in her right hand. Streaks of green in the foreground indicate the grassy land; the even ground is darkened along the upper edge. A red-orange strip marks the horizon. The pale yellow-green provides a neutral background for the colourfully clad damsel. Blue clouds in the narrow strip of sky are interspersed with streaks of red. With the high horizon, the sky and foreground are well established while the middle ground is nebulous. The arbitrarily painted harsh shadow is a typical feature of the Company Style from Tanjavur. The lady is elegant in mien and delicate in frame, signifying her high birth. The short choli exposes much of the slim midriff. The face is simply treated, with arbitrary shading around the eye and nose. The rendering of the delicate features adheres to the miniature tradition. The long, slim neck is adorned by a broad collar and a series of necklaces, whose sophisticated treatment heightens the pleasing aspect of youth.

Muktambal. South India, late eighteenth–early nineteenth century. Tempera on paper; 28.8 x 17.2 cm. British Museum 1951-2-10-019. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



The artist's depiction of the diaphanous half-sari is commendable. The long plait with a series of *jata-billai* (plait medallions) terminating in tassels – typically south Indian hairstyle and head ornaments – follows the curving contours of the back and enhances the graceful charm of the heroine. The painting is a remarkable example of refinement and finesse.

It is evident that the idealized portrait was painted by an artist trained in the Mughal miniature tradition of the north. This tradition was brought to Tanjavur by a group of artists who migrated to the area on the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 and the subsequent collapse of Mughal power. Mildred Archer states:

> ... during the administrative chaos of the eighteenth century, Mughal patronage had weakened, especially on the fringes of empire and by the end of the century many artists trained in Mughal miniature tradition were keen to accept work of any kind, no matter how menial. A few migrated from Hyderabad towards Tanjore [Tanjavur] and Madras in the south, while others moved from Delhi and Patna to Calcutta in the east.[5]

A number of natural history paintings were done by these miniature painters under the patronage of Sarfoji II; in fact many albums were painted – an important one was produced in 1802. Many other paintings that may be stylistically categorized as Company School were also done under the direct patronage of Sarfoji II. It may therefore be inferred that this ruler commissioned one such artist to immortalize his beloved swordwife in a painting. Closely related in style to "Muktamba Bai" is a painting entitled "Sadir", a typical example of Company-Tanjavur style, in the India Office Library. It bears close resemblance, in terms of dress and ornament as well as technique and execution, to the Muktambal painting.

NOTES

1. The English word "swordwife" was used by Jaya Appasamy who also identified the picture in question as "Muktamba Bai", in her *Tanjavur Paintings of the Maratha Period*, Abhinav (New Delhi 1980). I followed the trail and found material on *kadga vivaha*.
2. S. Gopalan (ed.), *Bhonsle Vamsa Charita* [Marathi inscription in the Big Temple, Tanjavur], translated by V. Srinivasachari [Tamil], The Sarasvati Mahal Series No. 46 (Tanjavur 1987), p. 136.
3. K.M. Venkataramaiah (ed.), *Tanjai Marathiya Mannar Varalaru – Mackenzie Chuvadi 3180* [Tamil], Tamil University (Tanjavur 1987), p. 154.

Col. C.B. Mackenzie first came to India to serve as an officer of Local Survey in Madras in 1782. In 1815 he became Surveyor General of India. Despite his multifarious official duties, he devoted much time and energy to the "exploration of historical sites and collection of antiquarian objects". His collection as was found in the Oriental Library was catalogued by William Taylor and published under the title "Catalogue Raisonne of Oriental Manuscripts in the Library of the (Late) College [Presidency College Library, Madras]", Gazette Press (Fort St George, Madras, 1857).

4. K.M. Venkataramaiah, *Tanjai Marathiya Mannar Kala Arasiyalum Samudaya Vazhkaiyum* [Tamil], Tamil University (Tanjavur 1984), p. 306.
5. Mildred Archer, *Natural History Drawings in the India Office Library*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (London 1962), p. 14.

NEW ASIAN GALLERIES AT THE NORTON SIMON MUSEUM, PASADENA

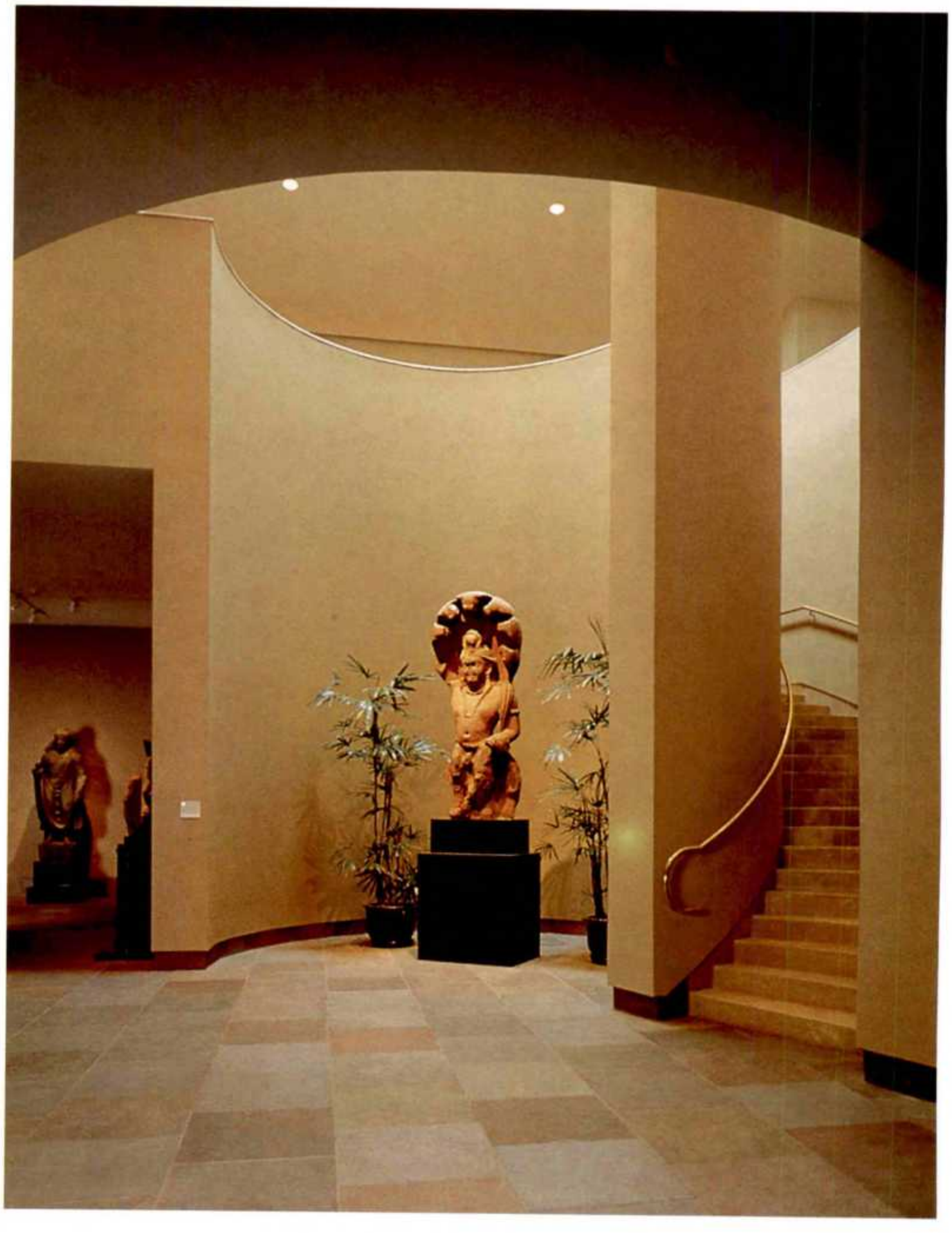
Jyotindra Jain

Amidst the current debate on an appropriate interpretation and representation of Asian cultures in museums, the new Asian Galleries at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, California, have set an example of innovative reinvention of museum space and creation of a wider composite context for the art of South and Southeast Asia. It is the first time in years that Asian art has been contextualized in a new and meaningful narrative.

When I visited the South Asian Galleries in April 1999, I was stunned to see the brilliantly reorganized spaces of the galleries by the renowned architect Frank Gehry, and equally illustrious display of South and Southeast Asian art by Dr Pratapaditya Pal, former Senior Curator of Asian Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Nearly three hundred works of Asian art are displayed here in fourteen galleries and a sculpture garden. Dating from the first millennium BCE through the nineteenth century, the collection comprising sculpture and paintings from the South and Southeast Asian region has been arranged not in the conventional place-period format, but in an organic synchronization, as it were.

A word about the reorganized spaces of the Museum. Frank Gehry, famous through the world for his design of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, has created a space here which is "ambiently sacred" and at the same time "modern". From the new entrance foyer, visitors can reach the "mandala-like space" of the Asian Galleries by climbing down a winding stairwell that evokes memories of the stupas of Sanchi. The colour and texture of the beige stone, piled up, block by block, respond to light filtering from the top, creating the sense of a hallowed space. The ambience of the colonnaded galleries, where red sandstone is used to clad broad columns, walls, and floors, with displays of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sacred statuary, recalls Asian temples and stupas embellished with divine images, frozen on another plane of time and space.

Apparently there was some anxiety that the locating of the Asian Galleries



1
A colossal Nagaraja from Kushan Mathura dominates the stairwell gallery.

2
Images from India, Thailand, and Cambodia from the same time periods in one gallery offer the visitor easy comparison of styles.

downstairs might reduce their importance. But then there were other advantages – more space, and an attached garden bringing in daylight and landscape. Frank Gehry has elevated the position of downstairs space by connecting it not by an insignificant elevator or flight of stairs but by the magnificent stairwell which draws the attention and curiosity of visitors right at the entrance foyer. "I think there is that element of surprise as you come down the stairwell," says Dr Pal.

The new concept of display envisioned here by Dr Pal is a major stride in the interpretation of Asian art in museums. So far curators had tended to treat modern political boundaries of nations also as the boundaries of artistic styles. Irrespective of the fact that in a given broad historical period, the art of what is today India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, had enjoyed a mutual reciprocity of themes and styles, museum curators had adamantly divided their collections from these regions into separate galleries of Indian Art, Nepalese Art, Southeast Asian Art and so on, undermining their inherent interrelationship. This factor has been meaningfully tackled by Dr Pal in displaying Asian art in the new galleries of the Norton Simon Museum and is well articulated by him:

> In most museums you will find installations that begin with India and end up with Southeast Asia implying as if each of these disparate cultural and geopolitical areas were isolated units. Of course that is not the case, because there was a constant exchange of ideas between these areas. So I thought how much more interesting it would be to keep the chronological thread, but mix up the objects within a chronological segment so that people can compare for themselves and see the similarities as well as the differences. Therefore if you walk into the gallery that shows the sculpture of a given period, say Buddha images from India, Thailand, and China, you will be able to stand in one place, simply pivot around your axis, and observe the variations on the theme.

Showing me around the new galleries, Dr Pal pointed to the sculpture garden attached to the main gallery and excitedly told me about his pleasure at seeing the sculptures not only in the artificial light of interiors, but in natural light outside as well. He made the point that originally the sculptures had belonged to external walls of temples where they were bathed in sunlight which changed from dawn to dusk. At this point he introduced the word "contextuality" in our talk. He explained that by creating a context he did not mean "recreating a

3
A gigantic Cambodian temple guardian stands at one end of the garden gallery bathed in sunlight coming through large glass windows.

temple for worship" but "suggesting the idea of sacred space without being literal". In Dr Pal's own words "the installation of the objects should be such that it conveys the spiritual essence that has been instilled into the object by the artist; here in the Asian Galleries of the Norton Simon Museum, everywhere we have provided both the architectural and spiritual context in a subtle and imaginative way". Considering the austere spaces, thoughtful selection of height at which the statues are placed, and the manner in which they are lit – partly by natural and partly by artificial light – I felt convinced by its suggestion of sacred space. One experiences peace here.

Beyond a plate glass wall is the sculpture garden where two Shivalingams and a Nandi are placed under a beautiful old olive tree. This immediately brings to mind the ancient Yaksha and Naga shrines scattered all over India, and found even today in many villages. The refined idea of contextuality becomes more convincing.

A lifetime's engagement with curating collections of Asian art in the United States and researching, documenting, and interpreting Indian art for more than forty years, has brought to Dr Pal a unique vision, perception, and knowledge which all put together have made it possible for him to conceptualize the display of the new Asian Galleries at the Norton Simon Museum. Any admirer of Asian art will be thrilled to see this combined masterwork of Frank Gehry and Pratapaditya Pal.

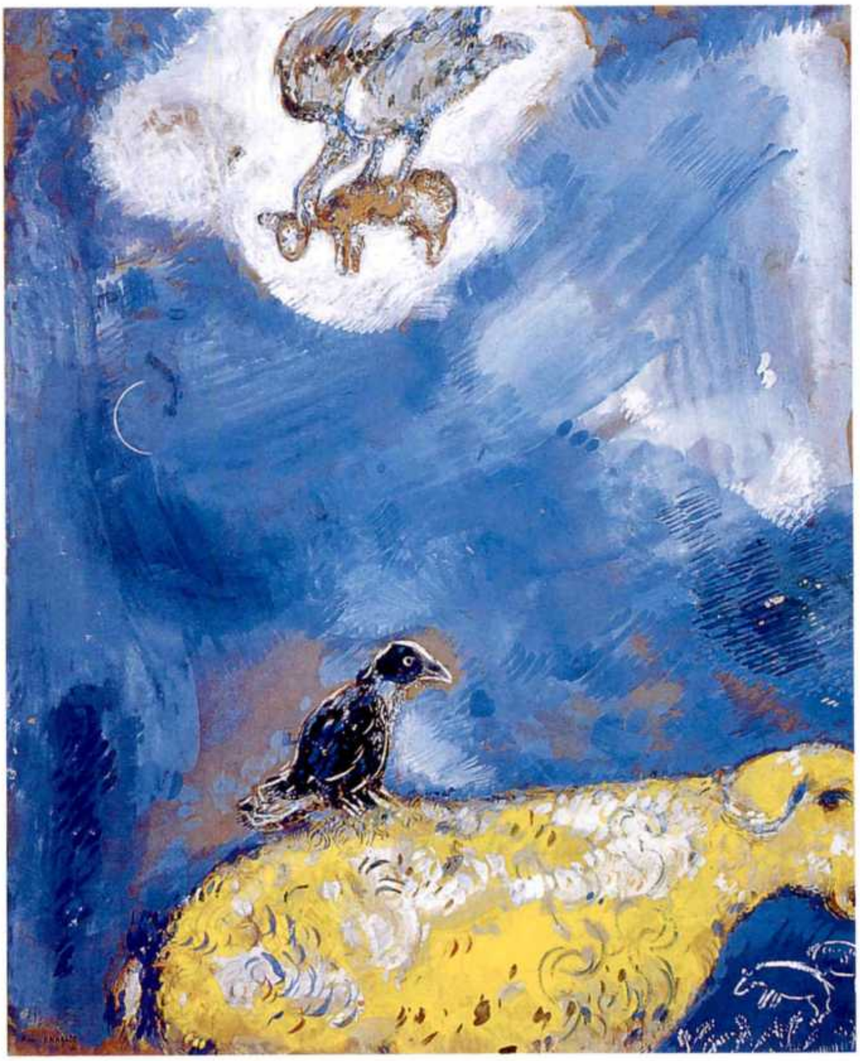
NEWSLETTER FROM MUMBAI

Monisha Ahmed

In the first two weeks of November 1999 the Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai, held a fascinating exhibition of Marwar miniature paintings from the Mehrangarh Fort and Museum, Jodhpur. Originally belonging to the family of HH Maharaja Gaj Singh, many of the miniatures depict his ancestors, their consorts, and others in his retinue. While Marwar miniatures have their own distinctive features, they have also borrowed extensively from the Mughal School. Popular themes in the paintings are of the maharajas sitting in their darbars or leading their men into battle, and hunting scenes. Released at the opening of the exhibition was the book *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style* by Rosemary Crill, Deputy Curator of the Indian and South-East Asian department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, who also spoke on the occasion on the Marwar miniature painting tradition. She concluded by stating that the introduction of photography gradually eased out the tradition of miniature painting as the maharajas developed enthusiasm for the former. Thus, she appealed to the present Maharaja, Gaj Singh, to patronize the art form so that it could be assured of survival well into the next century.

From October to December 1999, the cities of Delhi and Mumbai were treated to an exhibition of 114 works of French avant-garde art from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Known as the Vollard collection, the works came from the Leon Dierx Museum, Reunion Island. Ambroise Vollard was an art dealer whose perspicacity for recognizing brilliant artists when they were young and unknown led him to amass a collection of 4,500 works that include several Gauguins, Cezannes, and Picassos. However, the Leon Dierx Museum received only 154 of these works after Vollard's death when his brother Lucien gifted them in 1947. While the works in the collection are disparate and of unequal quality, the collection is significant because of its historical context and the fact that it represents all the major artists of the

1
The crow who wanted to be an eagle, illustration to *La Fontaine's Fables* by Marc Chagall, 1926–27. Gouache on thick brown paper, fixed on craft paper; 51.1 x 40.8 cm. Leon Dierx Museum, Reunion Island (France). Photograph: Jacques Kuyten.



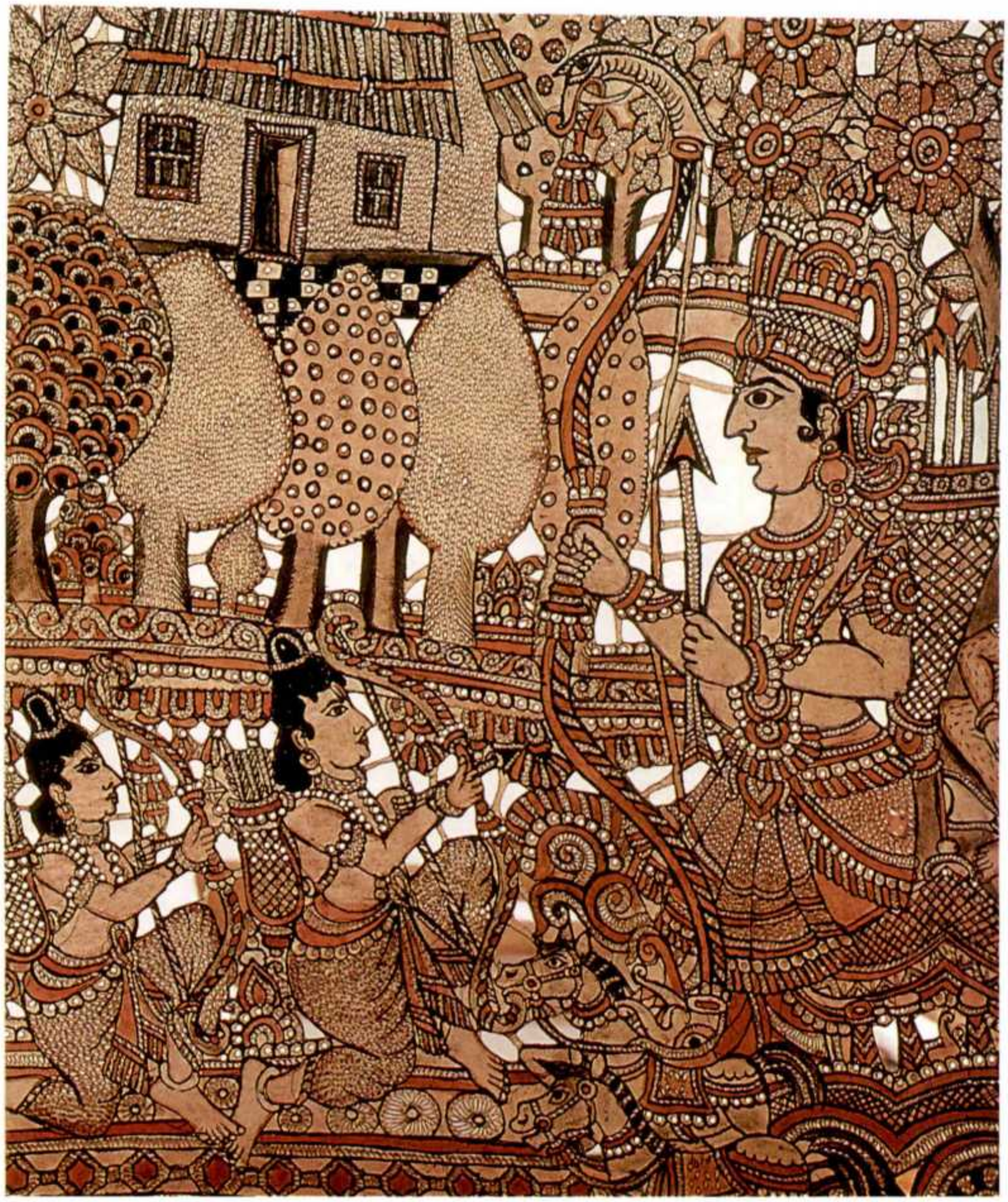
French avant-garde of the time (figure 1). Apart from being an art dealer, Vollard was also a publisher and he gave artists commissions to illustrate his books. He also reproduced a lot of the art for large-scale distribution as he believed that "art must constantly be on the move, travel and seek new environs". True to his convictions, after its showing in Mumbai the exhibition is travelling to Singapore, Paris, and Johannesburg before it returns to Reunion Island.

"Kalachakra – Time Past, Time Future", a benefit event for the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage's (INTACH) Elephanta project was held on November 29. The evening started at the Gateway of India, from where the invitees were taken across the harbour to the island of Elephanta. Once there, the event began with an art auction where works by twenty-two of India's leading contemporary artists raised over Rs 30 lakhs for INTACH. Among the artists who had donated works were K.G. Subramanyan, Navjot Altaf, Atul Dodiya, Jogen Chowdhury, and Manjit Bawa. Vilasrao Deshmukh, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, inaugurated the site museum and information centre which INTACH has established in a century-old cottage near the entrance to the caves. The evening concluded with a performance by well-known classical singer Shubha Mudgal and Bharata Natyam dancer Alarmel Valli (figure 2).

On December 7, the University of Mumbai and the British Council celebrated the culmination of two and a half years of work towards the restoration of the Rajabai Clock Tower and University Library. Designed by Sir Gilbert Scott in the late nineteenth century, the building is one of Mumbai's best known landmarks. However, over the years the building had deteriorated. Its Minton flooring tiles had become detached, wooden coffered ceiling members were loose and threatened to fall, and the stained-glass windows needed attention. Further, the interior walls had not been painted for more than three decades. Requiring tremendous expenditure, the work was made possible as a result of the joint collaboration and generous contributions of the University of Mumbai, British Council Division Mumbai, and Department of Trade and Industry (UK). One of the most complex parts of the project involved the restoration of the stained-glass windows and a team of experts was brought in from England to train Indian glaziers, local masons, and metal workers. The entire project was managed by conservation architect Vikas Dilawari, who states that the Rajabai Clock Tower and University Library is amongst the first public buildings in the country to be restored following internationally accepted principles and methodology of conservation.

The exhibition "The City of David – Discoveries from the Excavations" opened at the Prince of Wales Museum on December 15. An exhibition from the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, it focused on the first settlement at Jerusalem from its inception to its destruction, circa 70 CE. Archaeologists claim that this site, named after King David and located on the Eastern Hill, was the historical core of

2
Bharata Natyam dancer Alarmel Valli performs in front of the Sadashiva at INTACH's benefit event for Elephanta Island.
Courtesy INTACH, Mumbai.



3
Leather puppets, by Dalvai Chellapathi Rao, National Award winner, Nimmalakunba village, Anantpur district, Andhra Pradesh. Courtesy Paramparik Karigar.

ancient Jerusalem. They also state that this is the area where biblical Jerusalem was located. Amongst the artefacts unearthed by the excavation project, which ran from 1978 to 1985, are coins, domestic utensils, pottery, official seals, and bronze arrowheads. Most of these were on display at the exhibition which concluded on January 15, 2000.

The National Gallery of Modern Art's last exhibition for the century was held by Paramparik Karigar, a non-government organization devoted to working with the traditional crafts of India. From December 22, 1999 to January 9, 2000, works by craftsmen and women were shown for the first time in India in a national gallery. According to Roshan Kalapesi, one of the founder members of Paramparik Karigar, this was a big step forward for Indian crafts, as it meant they had finally found recognition in the art world. The exhibition was divided into three categories: classical, country, and contemporary craft. The classical craft section displayed the works of craftsmen and women who strictly adhere to the rules of the *Shilpashastras* in their work. Among the crafts included here were Kalamkari, Mithila painting, palm-leaf etching, *pata chitra*, and leather puppets (figure 3). Almost all the pieces shown here were made by master craftsmen, many of whom have received national awards for their work. The country section showed crafts created with a sense of freedom, yet utility pieces. Essentially from rural India, items on display were basketry from the Narmada Valley, metal work from Bastar, and terracotta pieces from Nagaland. The contemporary crafts section exhibited works that were the collaborative efforts of designers and craftspeople, meant to match the needs of the present-day market.

NEWSLETTER FROM LONDON

John Siudmak

London successfully celebrated its second *Asian Art in London* series of events between November 9–20, placing this event firmly on the international map. On this occasion the ranks of visiting scholars, dealers, collectors, and museum curators interested in the arts of South Asia and the Himalaya were greatly increased, attracted by the symposium connected to the exhibition of the Nyingjei Lam collection at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, reviewed in the last newsletter. The symposium had more than 160 participants from many countries, the highest attendance of any such event arranged by the organizers, Sotheby's Institute, and demonstrating the enormous interest in the field of Himalayan art. The various sessions were chaired by Pratapaditya Pal, who gave the introductory speech. The lectures of David Weldon, Jane Casey Singer and Amy Heller were concerned with tracing the stylistic or iconographic sources of early Tibetan styles or types, including examples in the collection, while this reviewer discussed the development of the Buddha image in Kashmir and its influence in western Tibet. Rob Linrothe discussed types of Indo-Tibetan wrathful deities with reference to the collection, and Ian Alsop Tibetan copies of sacred images involving his own dedicated search for an early original. The papers are to be published in the Spring issue of *Oriental Art,* which will appear at the same time as this magazine.

Apart from the Ashmolean Museum exhibition and the associated symposium, there was a huge choice of Asian art to see or activities in which to participate, including more than forty dealers' exhibitions, auctions, lectures, and other non-commercial exhibitions, as well as social events. The most important exhibition was that held at the British Museum, "Gilded Dragons: Buried Treasures from China's Golden Past", early Chinese art from Shanxi province, which mostly comprised small, exquisite objects or vessels in jade or precious metals. The capital of Shanxi province, Xi'an, ancient Chang'an, was the capital of China for more than a thousand years from the time of the Eastern Zhou dynasty through the Tang, and witnessed two golden ages, those of the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and Tang (618–906 CE) dynasties. The exhibition was divided into three sections, the first dealing with early tomb burials from the Eastern Zhou through the Han period; the second with Tang tombs and hoards, many of the finds dating from the last thirty years; and the third with finds from Buddhist temples and crypts.

The title is slightly misleading since gilded dragons only partly feature: one splendid example balancing on its front feet with the rear and long tail curled above, and another striding forward imperiously, both of the Tang period. In fact the main theme of the exhibition was the use of gold in the art of this period, which began as a means of embellishing details on bronze objects or vessels, and only gradually developed an importance in its own right, almost rivalling the other immutable precious substance jade, either for solid gold productions or those in bronze with gilding. Its use in the creation of precious objects and vessels was paralleled later by the use of silver. Apart from the different aesthetic, notions of Indian art of the corresponding period are quite different, conditioned as they are by the type of art objects which have survived, which are mainly sculptural or architectural, though as we know from sculpture, and indeed from the cave paintings of Ajanta and Bagh, Indian artists excelled in the applied arts. In ancient India there was no equivalent view of the afterlife to that of the Chinese, and thus no tradition of tomb burial for the noble and royal classes together with their prized material possessions. From the few extraordinary gold ornaments that have survived, one can surmise that the ancient Indian applied arts equalled anything in antiquity, and were a huge hoard to be found, Indian art history would need to be rewritten. Hoarding in India did take place, but was mostly of coins (not of precious objects or vessels) and later during the early Muslim incursions, sacred images.

The exhibition began with a collection of exquisite miniature gold animals and belt hooks, various gold fittings, and a magnificent sword with iron blade – one of the earliest examples of the use of iron – and gold hilt in the form of interlacing dragons decorated with turquoise, all found in tombs dating from the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–475 BCE). The few large-scale exhibits were examples of the famous terracotta army of Qin Shi Huangdi of the short-lived

Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE), represented by a general, a cavalryman with his horse and a kneeling archer. One of the greatest military personalities in history, this king united China and laid the foundations of its future unity and prosperity with a centralized government and bureaucracy, canals and road communications, and a standardized system of weights and measures. A knowledge of gilding, a process involving the application of an amalgam of gold and mercury to a bronze surface which was then fired, resulted in many objects being gilded rather than produced in solid gold. One of the finest pieces of gilding of this period is the remarkable model of a horse, one-third lifesize, produced during the Western Han dynasty (206–209 CE), probably depicting a horse of Ferghana, famed in China as a *tianma* or heavenly horse, and universally prized even up to recent times. From this period there were also ten miniature polychrome pottery soldiers on horseback. The military importance of the horse in China, especially in campaigns against the marauding nomads on its western and northern borders, equalled that of the elephant in ancient Indian warfare, and it is as frequently depicted in art as its Indian counterpart. Found in the same tomb as the horse was a magnificent gilded bronze censer with a bowl supported by a tall stand having a perforated cover in the form of mountains, which would appear shrouded in clouds when incense was burnt. From the same period came a group of jade animals, a horse with immortal rider, two chimera, a bear, and a bird. In a coffin from the tomb of a woman was a necklace of semi-precious stone beads, including round and barrel-shaped beads, and several beads of crouching lions closely resembling Indian beads of the same period. In India the equivalent beads would be of crystal, banded agate, carnelian, or amethyst, rather than those of agate, crystal, amber, jade, or turquoise in the case of the Chinese example.

The Tang period saw a great flowering of the arts in China. Chang'an was the furthermost point of the Silk Route, and its great wealth attracted traders from many different countries and cultures. Byzantine and Umayyad coins were found there, of which examples were included in the exhibition. Advances in metalwork were stimulated by the migration of Persian artisans fleeing the Arab invasion of the Sassanian empire, and the Sassanian tradition of decorating the interiors of silver vessels with a design of parcel gilt applied repousse animals and birds gave rise to a totally Chinese version. This section began with items of daily feminine use. There were jade and gold hairpins, jade and openwork silver hair ornaments, a shell-shaped gilded silver cosmetic box, and an example of a polished bronze mirror, which are quite common. A single pair of gold encrusted earrings were shown. Earrings were rarely used in China due to Confucian belief that the body should not be violated. There were several pottery figurines with *sancai* (three-colour) decoration including a rare leaping horse and rider. Amongst other pottery figurines were a group of animal-headed anthropomorphic figurines representing the zodiacal signs of the Chinese twelve-year cycle. This section included examples of the famous Hejiacun hoard, found in a southern suburb of Xi'an, and comprising more than a thousand items including 270 gold and silver objects. There was a selection of silver dishes in a Sassanian-inspired style, one a remarkable flask with a dancing horse holding a cup in its mouth, and many other vessels in chased gold and silver gilt.

The last section also represented the Tang period, and began with four Buddhist sculptures found in different excavations in the province. A group of objects excavated from the crypt of the Qingshan temple included a large stone reliquary in the form of a temple, each of the four sides engraved with a scene from the life of the historical Buddha. This originally contained two coffin-shaped reliquaries of encrusted bronze, gold, and silver. Together with the stone reliquary was found a bronze jug in post-Sassanian style, the sides decorated with six sharply featured heads of Indian appearance. The similarity of these heads to those of the early medieval ivory plaques from Brahminabad in Sindh in the British Museum was noted in the catalogue. The most sumptuous finds were excavated from the crypt of Famen temple, which give some idea of the wealth of the Buddhist temples at this time. Their excessive wealth combined with tax-exempt status contributed to the resentment against what was represented as a foreign religion, which finally led to the Buddhist persecutions of 845 CE. A lavishly decorated silver gilt kneeling Bodhisattva was especially made to hold the famous relic of the Famen temple, the Buddha's finger-bone, and is the only Tang silver vessel with an imperial title. Other remarkable chased and silver gilt vessels included two incense burners, and a variety of boxes and jars with covers. Finally there was a set of five reliquaries of diminishing sizes fitting one inside another. The exhibition was accompanied by a well-illustrated and reasonably priced catalogue by Carol Michelson (British Museum Press, £ 14.99).

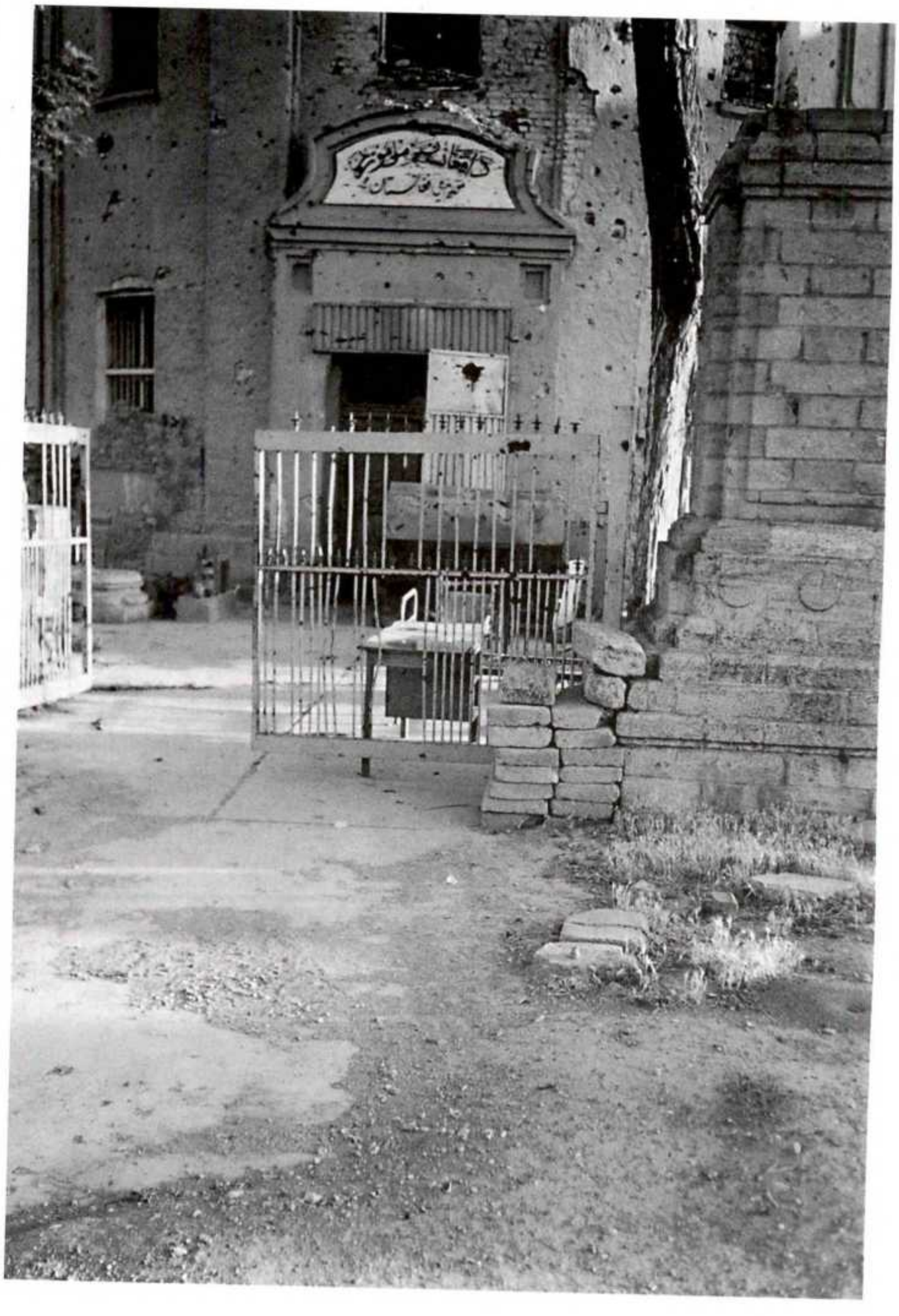
NEWSLETTER FROM THE USA

Donald M. Stadtner

The Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, California, hosted in the autumn an important international symposium to highlight the plight of Afghanistan. While we lament the incessant plundering of archaeological sites in India and the pillage of Khmer temples in Cambodia, nothing can rival the holocaust on cultural property in Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion in 1979. The vicious war of independence against Soviet forces and the long years of internecine fighting after the Russian withdrawal in 1988 not only jeopardized Islamic and Buddhist sites that were in the line of fire but also brought to a standstill the distinguished history of archaeological exploration in the country. The venerable museum in Kabul, taking a direct rocket hit in 1993, remains in a shambles, a symbol of the countrywide devastation.

Dispersed worldwide, the museum's possessions, including such priceless treasures as the delicate Begram ivories, are perhaps forever lost from public view. Western museums have enforced a largely self-imposed ban on illicit objects from the country, but this has encouraged the purchase of works by private collectors. Contributing to the problem is the fact that the Kabul Museum's extensive holdings were never completely and adequately photographed and catalogued. Also, thousands of coins once preserved at the museum have gone missing.

Before the country's recent troubles the government actively sponsored archaeological exploration and conservation. Indeed, this effort began in earnest as early as the 1920s when French teams worked closely with Afghan researchers. Later, beginning in the 1950s, the country welcomed teams from Italy, Japan, and the United States which resulted in groundbreaking publications. The Archaeological Survey of India also played an important role, starting in the



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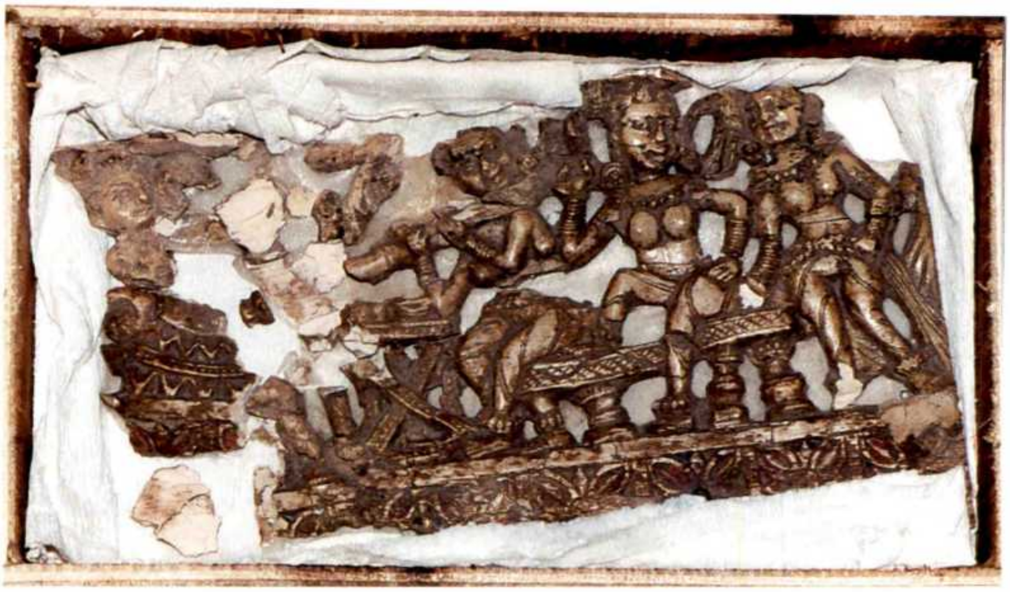
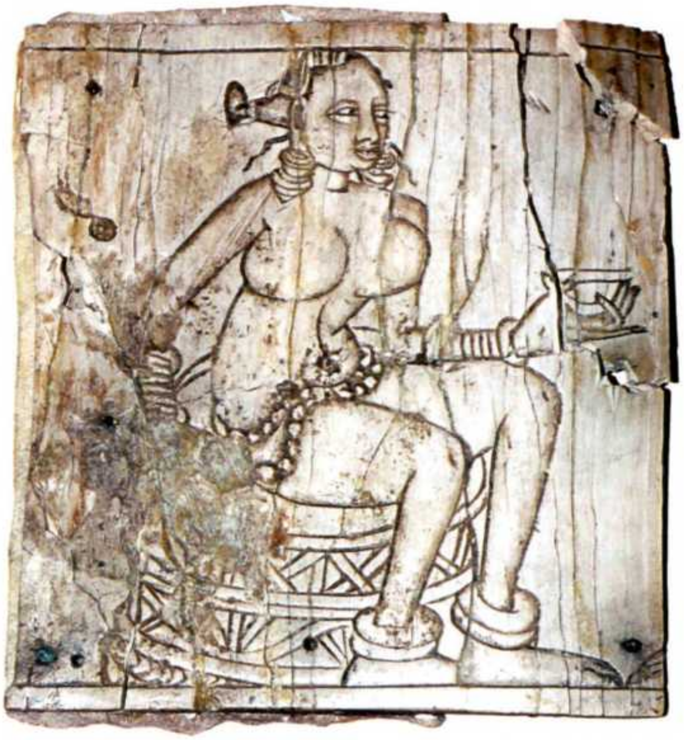
View of the entrance to the Kabul Museum which was hit by rockets in 1993; seventy-five per cent of its collection was looted.



2, 3
Damaged Begram ivory plaques looted from the Kabul Museum and seen in the London art market.

1950s, with the Indian Archaeological Delegation to Afghanistan in 1956. Subsequently, Indian conservators shared in the painstaking work of repairing the celebrated stone and stucco-covered Buddhas at Bamiyan. This history of fruitful international cooperation has ceased, first with the Soviet takeover and now with the notorious Taliban regime. At the same time, throughout these decades, groups within Afghanistan have actively engaged in illicit excavations, the fruits of which have filtered into Peshawar, Pakistan, and then on to the international art market, from London to New York. Moreover, persistent rumours exist that high-ranking Pakistani military men are engaged in some of the trafficking.



The conference at the Pacific Asia Museum was jointly sponsored by the International Committee for the Salvation of the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan and the Museum. The two-day gathering, October 15–16, 1999, featured twelve lectures ranging over broad topics, from numismatic studies (A.D.H. Bivar and D.W. MacDowall) to Timurid architecture (Linda Komaroff). Other subjects included a survey of Buddhist art (Zemaryalai Tarzi) and Shahi sculpture (Donald Stadtner).

The conference culminated in a roundtable discussion focusing on the current status of historical monuments in Afghanistan. A representative from UNESCO was present, together with an official from the US Department of State. It was reported that a museum has been established in Switzerland that will serve as a temporary repository of recovered objects until the time when works of art would be able to be repatriated to Afghanistan. Closely monitoring the situation on the ground in Islamabad, Pakistan, is the Society for the Preservation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage. The conference, entitled "From Glory to Plunder", sadly captured the mood of the gathering. But the last toast at a farewell dinner expressed the optimistic hope that the title of the next conference could be "From Plunder to Glory".

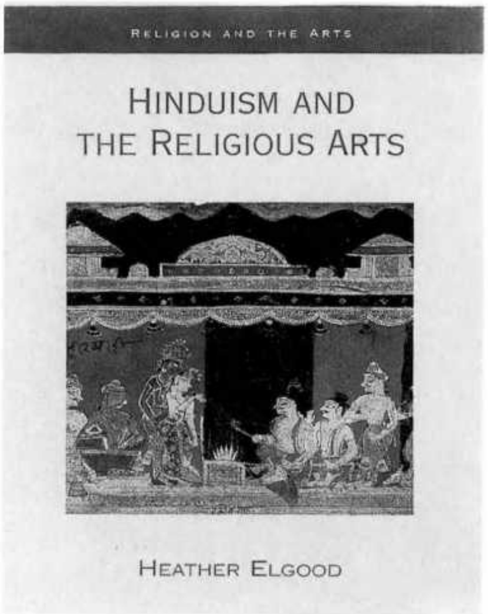
FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All photographs courtesy
Ms Meher MacArthur.

***Hinduism and the Religious Arts.* By Heather Elgood. Cassell, London, 1999, 246 pages, price not stated.**

Heather Elgood's *Hinduism and the Religious Arts* is the third volume in a series on "Religion and the Arts" edited by John Hinnells of the University of Derby. Intended to explore "how the visible has been used to express the invisible", the series focuses on art forms associated with the world's religions. Volumes already published deal with Art and Religion in Africa and in the Pacific. Elgood's volume is probably as broad in scope as the others which deal with whole continents; she takes great care to be evenhanded in her representation of north and south, Great and Little, within Indian religious tradition.

Apart from laying out the aims of the book, the Introduction quickly surveys the historical development of Hinduism. Chapter 2, Sacred Imagery, discusses the role of images in Hinduism – the wide range of cult objects, the purpose served by images, and the shastric literature that governs the making and consecrating of icons. Chapter 3, Hindu Deities, briefly describes the iconographic forms of Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi. In Chapter 4, Hindu Sacred Architecture, Elgood discusses in brief the plan and decoration of Hindu temples. Chapters 5 and 6 are about patronage – at the royal and village/tribal levels, respectively.



Elgood's interest is "in the area where art, religion and anthropology meet". The book, accordingly, draws upon the works of not just art historians, but of religious historians and anthropologists whose interesting findings seldom find their way into art history books. Ritual performance is the perfect point of intersection for all of these disciplines, and Elgood's book frequently refers to rituals that are currently performed, as well as to those described in ancient texts, to give us a sense of artefacts and human actors interacting in a manner prescribed by sacred texts. For instance, Elgood brings to our attention the close parallels between the coronation/consecration and daily ablutionary rituals performed for god and king in eighth–twelfth century southern India. The elaboration of such parallelisms only helped to reinforce the political legitimacy and spiritual power that the southern kings hoped to acquire through their lavish patronage of temple-building (pp. 169-75).

Elgood also argues for art as text. Since the work of art embodies religious ideas or is used in religious ritual, it provides tangible evidence of religious practice, which can clarify, confirm, or most crucially, contradict the textual versions of the same practice. Responding "to the changing requirements of society, works of art provide a more faithful record of popular religion than the textual equivalent" (p. 11).

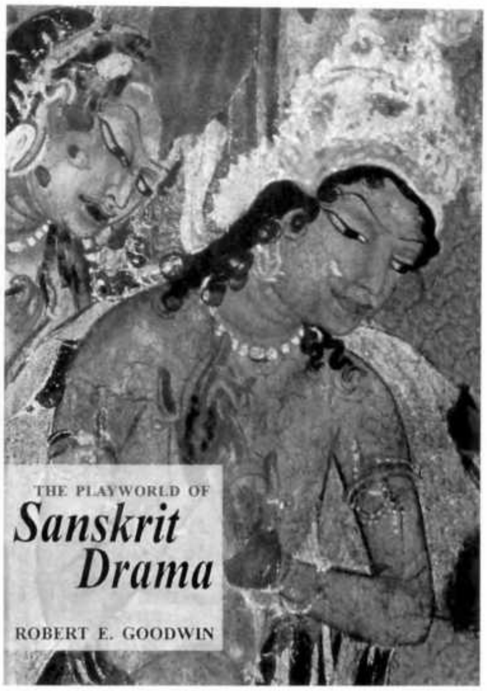
Discrepancies between art and text are a fascinating area of investigation, as they can tell us a great deal about the sociological situation that produces and maintains ideal and actual versions of tradition. Elgood quotes, for instance, the anthropologist Chris Fuller, who has worked extensively on the Tamil temple tradition. The priests Fuller interviewed agreed that Agamic texts were the authoritative source on ritual performance, but, "Probably the most important sociological and historical fact about the Agamic literature... is that it is nowadays largely unknown" (Fuller, quoted on p. 32). In fact, Agamic texts differ greatly from priestly practice, but the priests have constituted a parallel Agamic tradition in their belief that the unread texts authorize their ritual acts. Even more revealing is the iconometric work of John Mosteller, who compared shilpa-shastric injunctions on making sculpture with a careful scrutiny of actual sculptures. He says: "I found not a single correspondence between image and shastric text" (p. 31). Mosteller's conclusion is that the shastras were not prescriptive manuals, as we have held them to be, but are descriptive texts that set down fragments of oral tradition; furthermore, those who set the texts down were probably of a different class and milieu from the makers of the images.

Thanks to Elgood's wide range of references, every chapter offers some explanation of the context, function, and social meaning of art that standard art history books lack. The chapter on Royal Patronage in particular, tells us a great deal about the political compulsions that centred around the making – or seizing – of temples and icons. However, the book could have done with tighter editing, as there is a fair amount of repetition in it. There are also some errors of information. Ahimsa and vegetarianism are included among the "key concepts" that "characterize Hindu belief" (p. 3); in fact these concepts were absorbed from and are characteristic of Jainism, and several "Hindu" cults still require blood sacrifice. Among the avataras of Vishnu, Buddha is included, according to Elgood, as "a divine saviour figure" (p. 63); in fact, this heterodox teacher is cleverly incorporated within the avataras as the Great Deluder, who leads the demons astray with his false anti-Vedic doctrines. Terms such as "Aryan" and "non-Aryan", whose meaning it is hard to ascertain, are also frequently used.

Writing about Hinduism cannot be easy. Like most books on the subject, Elgood's Introduction begins with the disclaimer that "Hinduism" is not a religion; it is a term coined recently by outsiders, to refer to a complex of beliefs and practices observed in the Indian subcontinent. Again like most books, for the sake of convenience and elegance, it then uses the term as though it did indeed refer to a compact religious system. How differently this consolidation of multiple traditions under the one rubric reads, from different vantage points: for the diaspora, a welcome acknowledgement of a complex and important tradition; at home, again, the mainstream sucking in little rivulets, to swell its own tide.

Kavita Singh

***The Playworld of Sanskrit Drama.* By Robert E. Goodwin. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1998, 240 pages, Rs 350.**



The playworld intended here is not the theatre but only the mind of the connoisseur. The book is a literary criticism of seven famous Sanskrit plays. These criticisms were first published individually as articles over a period of time, and are now revised and brought out together here. The author, Robert Goodwin, has a combined PhD in Classics and Sanskrit. He taught Sanskrit for some time and is a businessman now.

He says that the book is an interpretative study and that the literary criticisms are based not only on Indian aesthetics as interpreted in the *Natyashastra, Dhwanyaloka, Kavyamimamsa*, etc. but also on Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, *Arthashastra*, Kashmiri Shaivism, and other works. He does not go by conventional methods nor does he fully agree with Rabindranath Tagore's "Sakuntala – its Inner Meaning". He says that "those who do not imagine that aesthetic emotions can have anything to do with real life concerns have critical myopia". He has been "influenced by various notions and practices of modern criticism, structuralism, psychoanalytical criticism, receptive theory deconstruction etc."

Discussing the metaphysics of the plays, he adds, "I approach Kavya through the mainstream of Indian aesthetical theory and it is the monistic tradition of Kashmiri Saivism and to a lesser extent Vedanta that is presented here." He examines how the poet speaks from the point of view of the Purusharthas and also tries to establish the ideological concept of "Lila".

He first examines Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam* under the heading "Aesthetic and Erotic Entrancement". He does it in four sections, Aesthetic Reception, Love and the Playworld, the Dharmic Father, and the Ambiguous Playworld. He next takes up Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiyam*, calling it a meta-drama, and analyses it in four sections, Replaced Woman, Courtly Love, Aesthetics of Dakshinya and Rasa, and the Love Ideal. Next he takes up Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitram* and discusses it under the sections Aesthetic, Organic Erotic, and Arthic Perception.

The next play taken up is Vishakhadatta's *Mudrarakshasam*. In the concluding part he mentions, "the play leaves us in an unresolved divided state. We cannot help feeling that the final solution... is a mere posture. Chanakya's imminent retirement at the end of the play does nothing to banish the spectre of disdainful mastery he had raised."

The writer then takes up two plays of Bhasa, *Pratijna Yugandharayanam* and *Swapna-Vasavadattam*, under the heading "Paradise in a Prison Cell". He discusses at length the action of minister Yugandharayana to serve his king, and on occasion, compares him with Chanakya and Amatya Rakshasa. He has provided diagrams to analyse the emotional aspects of the relationship between Yugandharayana and the King and remarks that Yugandharayana is the Ego of Udayana in the Freudian sense. Discussing the courtly ethos and "Drama v/s Reality" in *Swapna-Vasavadattam*, he concludes with the remark, "to refuse to allow that beauty may coexist with human emotional forms is to deny the Rasika his psychological complexity and this is the greatest disservice we can do to Sanskrit literature".

Shudraka's play *Mricchakatikam* is next discussed under the title "Charudatta in Love". He poses the question of what was the meaning to the contemporary audience of a play which celebrates the ascendancy of an obscure "Man of Heart", who never acts on his own behalf, though he spends a remarkable amount of time lamenting his condition. He remarks that "criticism of the play has hardly scratched the surface".

There is a final chapter on Rasa Poetics and he concludes saying that there is nothing compared with Ananda Vardhana's adulation of "Kavya Samsara" – poetic universe.

Goodwin has dissected and analysed the situations in depth and in a scholarly manner. John Ruskin has mentioned in *Sesame and Lilies*, that a reader should try to get at the author's meaning. When this is attempted and when there are several levels of meaning, one may find a meaning quite unintended by the author. As Goodwin himself admits, not everyone may agree with his comments and conclusions.

Drama is a *drishya-kavya*. It has to be seen, not merely read. This aspect is not treated by Goodwin. A *sahridaya* will realize certain aspects intended by the author only when the performance is viewed. Sanskrit scholars should realize that Sanskrit drama is still being staged in several centres. It is performed in temples in Kerala under the name Kutiyattam.

Act III of *Pratijna Yugandharayanam* is one such Kutiyattam. The Chakyars – actors of Kutiyattam – bring out through their *abhinaya*, the *dhvani* and implied meanings. In the text of Act III, in the beginning, there is a lot of speech in code language. Goodwin has not commented on it. When the Chakyar presents this, he speaks the words in the text, but shows hand-gestures for the real intended meaning.

Bhasa has not been considered as a first-rate poet, but there is no disputing that he is a first-rate dramatist. Bhasa gives plenty of room for the actors to improvise. In Act II of *Swapna-Vasavadattam* the maid says that Padmavati is playing with a ball, and later Padmavati enters playing with the ball. These are occasions for performing the "Dance with the Ball". The spectators are as interested in seeing the dance as scholars of literature are interested in the text. In Kutiyattam this act is called the Ball Play Act (Pandattankam). *Pratijna Yugandharayanam* can be properly understood only if the story is previously known. Even if the dramatist has not alluded to it, the Chakyar brings out all this during the recall of past events technically known as Nirvahana.

While the book is well produced, the type used is small. As the subject is heavy and the treatment equally so, one gets fatigued with the small type. The very essential and copious notes are in such tiny print that they can hardly be read without a magnifying glass. But on the whole it is a good work.

L.S. Rajagopalan

Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East. By John Guy. Thames and Hudson, London, 1998, 192 pages, 241 illustrations, £ 29.95.

Indian textiles were in great demand throughout the world for their fine quality, brilliant and fast colours, and matchless design. Textiles constituted the single major item of trade for many centuries. Though archaeological and literary evidences date back to the early centuries of the Christian era, the story of this trade becomes clearer from the sixteenth century. A glimpse of this flourishing trade could be found in this passage of the well-known Portuguese observer Tome Pires written in 1515: "Cambay chiefly stretches out her two arms, with her right arm she reaches out towards Aden and with the other towards Malacca...."

John Irwin was a pioneering scholar in the field of India's textile trade with the Western world. His *Origins of Chintz* (1970) written jointly with Kathrine Brett broke new ground in drawing heavily on English East India Company records to construct a comprehensive account of the production of, and trade with the West in high quality chintzes. Now nearly three decades later, John Guy, working in the same Museum as Irwin, has focused his attention on India's textile trade with Southeast and East Asia. His subject is not limited to high quality chintzes from the Coromandel Coast but also includes the coarse painted and printed dyed cottons, and the famous double-ikat silk patolas of Gujarat.

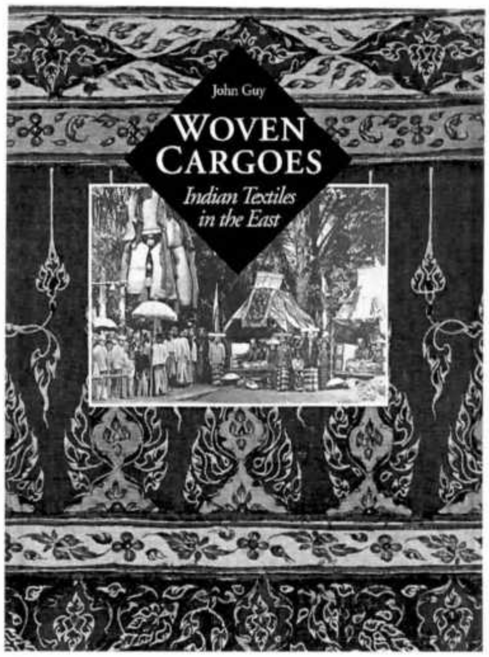
In Southeast Asian societies Indian textiles – specially the expensive patola silks and the exquisite painted chintzes – were greatly treasured as family heirlooms or part of royal paraphernalia and as symbols of one's superior status in society. In Japan they were in demand as collectibles. For their high value and comparative rarity these textiles were a principal commodity in the trade along with spices like black pepper, clove, nutmeg, and mace, forest products like camphor, sandalwood, and sappanwood, and minerals like gold and silver. John Guy's book is on both textiles and trade – but in fact it is a work of many dimensions as he discusses the textiles, their production technique, their place in Southeast and East Asian kingdoms, the merchants and trading companies involved in this trade, and some exquisite examples discovered in recent years along with the specimens acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Dutch museums in the last century.

These cloths have an important place in the history of Indian textiles as they are virtually unknown in their places of origin; with the exception of a few specimens in the Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, no example could be found in India. These cloths have largely filled the gaps in our knowledge derived from trading records of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the English East India Company where these are named or described without providing any sample.

John Guy has divided his book into nine chapters. The first, on Textiles, Culture and Spices, provides an outline of his work in a succinct manner. In the following chapter he describes the techniques of manufacture of tradecloths – both silk and cotton – and the production centres in the three principal regions – Gujarat, the Coromandel Coast, and Bengal. The third and fourth chapters of the book provide a detailed overview of India's textile trade with the Arab world, Persia and beyond, their parallels with Southeast Asian market textiles and the state of India's textile trade with Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and East Java before the Europeans arrived in hordes to dominate the scene.

The second part of the book has five chapters dealing with the Malay World denoting the role of Melaka (Malacca) and Sumatra; Indonesia with special reference to Java, Sulawesi (Celebes) and the eastern islands like Makassar, Maluku, etc.; Thailand; China; and Japan respectively. The author has examined the accounts of observers like Pires, who lived at Melaka from 1512 to 1514, Durate Barbosa, Peter Floris, the extensive records of the VOC and the English East India Company, and artistic remains like murals and sculptures, and has tried to relate the textiles described therein to the cloths already known from older collections and specimens found in recent years. Though China was one of the earliest eastern markets of Indian textiles, historical collections of Indian cloths in Japan display the greatest variety seen anywhere outside the subcontinent. They were imported mainly to satisfy the Japanese love of the exotic. The trade was limited, but high quality Indian textiles were prized by the Japanese nobility.

The book is profusely illustrated with 241 illustrations of which 145 are in full colour. Many key examples have been reproduced in full-page illustrations, making the book a visual treat. The bibliography is fairly exhaustive, the glossary and the data giving the result of accelerated radiocarbon analysis of twenty-two samples of both Egyptian and Indonesian provenance are specially noteworthy. A few typographical errors have, however, crept in: e.g., Tome Pire (p. 39), Metha R N (instead of Mehta, p. 184), Vogelswood-Eastwood (instead of Vogelsang-Eastwood, p. 178). Details of Scanlon 1989 (fn. 15), Fryer 1698 (fn. 32), Ahmad 1989 (fn. 7), all on page 178, have been omitted in the bibliography.



Woven Cargoes is undoubtedly a major work for students of Indian textile history and maritime trade and for everyone interested in our heritage.

Syamali Das

***Changing Myths and Images: Twentieth-Century Popular Art in India.* Compiled by Gerald James Larson, Pratapaditya Pal, and H. Daniel Smith. Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, 1997, 64 pages, price not stated.**

Changing Myths and Images is essentially a catalogue of an exhibition of popular religious prints held at the Indiana University Museum (Bloomington) to mark the fiftieth year of Indian independence. It connotes a welcome burgeoning of interest in mass market material culture in India, that is, in products distinguished both from the high art of the connoisseur and from regionally specific forms of folk art.

Indian popular prints cover a wide range of themes, but the great majority of the prints reproduced in this catalogue are Hindu religious prints: of deities, holy men, and religious sites. They belong for the most part to the collection of Professor H. Daniel Smith, the distinguished historian of Hinduism who has given currency to the rather quaint term "god posters", supplemented by pieces collected by Professor Ainslie T. Embree, formerly of Columbia University.

All this fuss over the sort of common kitsch one can pick up any day from a wayside stall must strike many Indians as a rather curious foreign eccentricity or they might even feel a sense of injury that such crude artefacts are being put on display to "represent" modern India to the world. While this may indeed seem like an extension of the exoticizing, Orientalist gaze, the three introductory essays in this book and the catalogue notes on the exhibits make it clear that there is a great deal to be learned from such everyday objects, whatever their status as "art".

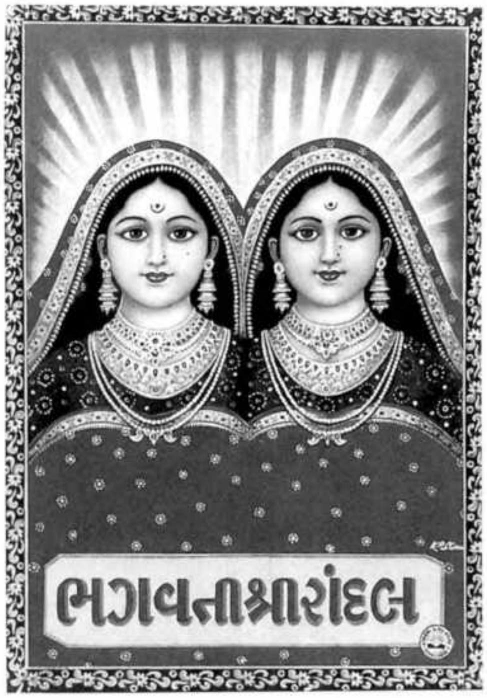
Smith's introductory essay on "The impact of 'god posters' on Hindus and their devotional traditions" may be familiar from the version earlier published in *Media and the Transformation of Religion in South Asia* (Susan Wadley and L.A. Babb, editors, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). As its title and original context of publication imply, Smith is most interested in the god posters as indices of changing Hindu religious sensibility, mapping the regional distribution of cult and sectarian affiliations, and chronicling the waxing and waning of the various deities and cult figures in the popular imagination. Thus, recent god posters record the "invention" of the cult of the goddess Santoshi Ma, promoted from obscurity following the 1975 mythological film *Jai Santoshi Ma,* the growing importance of the god Aiyappan outside his home state of Kerala, the establishment of the new Divali puja "*trimurti*" of Lakshmi, Ganesh, and Sarasvati, the increasing popularity of the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage, and so on.

While much of Smith's contribution is straightforwardly (and very usefully) descriptive – "Where are god posters marketed?", "What do god posters look like?" – he breaks interesting new ground in the final sections of his essay where he discusses the varieties of "treatment" accorded the god posters, that is, their role in popular religious practice. As he points out, god posters may be worshipped as embodiments of divinity, or they may be treated quite casually, as mere secular objects of use or decoration almost drained of ritual significance – as when they are reproduced on postcards, sweet boxes, and all manner of advertisements, decorate magnets on refrigerators, or glow in the dark as night-lights. Nonetheless, Smith emphasizes that the availability of mass-produced religious imagery has contributed importantly to the development of new and democratic forms of Hindu ritual practice that are still barely documented or understood.

Pratapaditya Pal's essay provides an extremely knowledgeable commentary on the items in the Bloomington exhibition from the viewpoint of a professional art historian. As Pal turns to classifying and describing the prints, proceeding through the Hindu pantheon from the images of gods, to child-gods, to goddesses and to godmen, with a postscript on samples of Islamic and Christian iconography, he resists the temptation to dismiss the works as aesthetically inferior or incorrect by the standards of classical Hindu iconography. Instead he communicates a sense of excitement at being witness to a dynamic process of iconographic innovation as god poster artists stretch the limits of their representational conventions to create new objects of devotion. In fact, Pal concludes his essay by asserting that the humble, ubiquitous, and undeniably kitschy god poster bears witness to a new era in the creative cultural encounter between India and Europe: "As was done in ancient Gandhara in the early centuries of the Common Era and a second time under the Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556–1605), these prints combine European aesthetic ideas and techniques with Indian subject matter and ethos to create a unique art form.... The art of Gandhara had a limited impact; Mughal painting was more influential in altering the Indian's aesthetic sensibility; but the process of oleography has succeeded in creating an art form that is nationally familiar" (p. 37).

Concentrating on the sociological and art-historical aspects of god posters, both Smith and Pal sidestep the tricky question of aesthetic value. The question is tackled, if somewhat indirectly, in Gerald Larson's more theoretical contribution to the book, an essay entitled "A postmodernist perspective on India's popular religious art". Specifically, Larson identifies a checklist of the general features of postmodernist art (as distinguished from "realist" modernism and high-modernism), finding the god posters postmodernist on all counts. Thus, popular religious prints (1) are abruptly juxtaposed with everyday life; (2) contradict notions of a grand or master narrative; (3) are a consumer object or market commodity; (4) are drained of "subjectivity", "both in terms of the content of the art and in terms of the artists and publishers" – "as there are new varieties of soaps or cereals, so there can be new varieties or new combinations of gods and goddesses" endlessly generated by the "entrepreneurial imagination" (pp. 26-27); and (5) represent a new kind of political expression (not always of the loftiest kind!). This is all rather schematic, perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek, and certainly bristling with conceptual problems. But it does introduce a welcome *theoretical* thrust to discussion of the arts of everyday life in South Asia, pointing to issues that have since been taken up more robustly by Chris Pinney, Kajri Jain, and others.

A word now about the exhibits themselves. From the viewpoint of a fellow aficionado there are some fascinating pieces displayed here – old faithfuls, the works of both better known and relatively unknown artists, and some intriguing innovations to which the catalogue notes draw attention. Some of the innovations may prove quite ephemeral (but that in itself is interesting); others may shortly come to be accepted as "traditional". One misses publication dates, which are offered only in the case of the older, pre-independence pieces. (Of course, dating the work is bound to be a tricky business, given the extent of plagiarism in this industry, but even so approximate dates might help in mapping the trajectories of images through time and their availability in different regional markets.)



The goddess Randhal Mata, represented in the form of conjoined twins, by K.P. Sivan, Bombay Glass House, Ahmedabad. H. Daniel Smith Poster Archive, Department of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library, No. 1834.

A more fundamental problem is the self-limiting restriction of the exhibition to Hindu religious prints – the so-called "god poster" type within the larger genre of popular "calendar" art – and their rather commonsensical presentation according to categories of the Hindu pantheon. There is only token recognition and theorization of the range and variety of non-Hindu religious imagery and of the vital organizational and aesthetic connections between the production of Hindu religious icons and the production of other varieties of popular "calendar art" and other genres of the modern mass media. Explicating these connections is a task which should remain, centrally, on the agenda for the future.

Patricia Uberoi

Joachim K. Bautze teaches art history at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg and is the author of various publications on Indian painting and early Indian art. He has studied the Bundi-Kota schools and is presently engaged in the documentation of palace wall-paintings in Sirohi, Jodhpur, and Dungarpur.

Andrew Topsfield, the editor of Marg's *Court Painting in Rajasthan,* is a Senior Assistant Keeper at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. He has written catalogues, articles, and a thesis on the Udaipur school of painting.

Asok Kumar Das is a well-known scholar of painting in the Mughal period. He was formerly Director of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur, and was recently Satyajit Ray Professor at Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan.

Phani Kanta Mishra, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Bhopal Circle, led the ASI team excavating the Bijamandala mound.

Devangana Desai is Editor of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* and the author of *The Religious Imagery of Khajuraho* (1996). Her ongoing research covers the museum images of Khajuraho.

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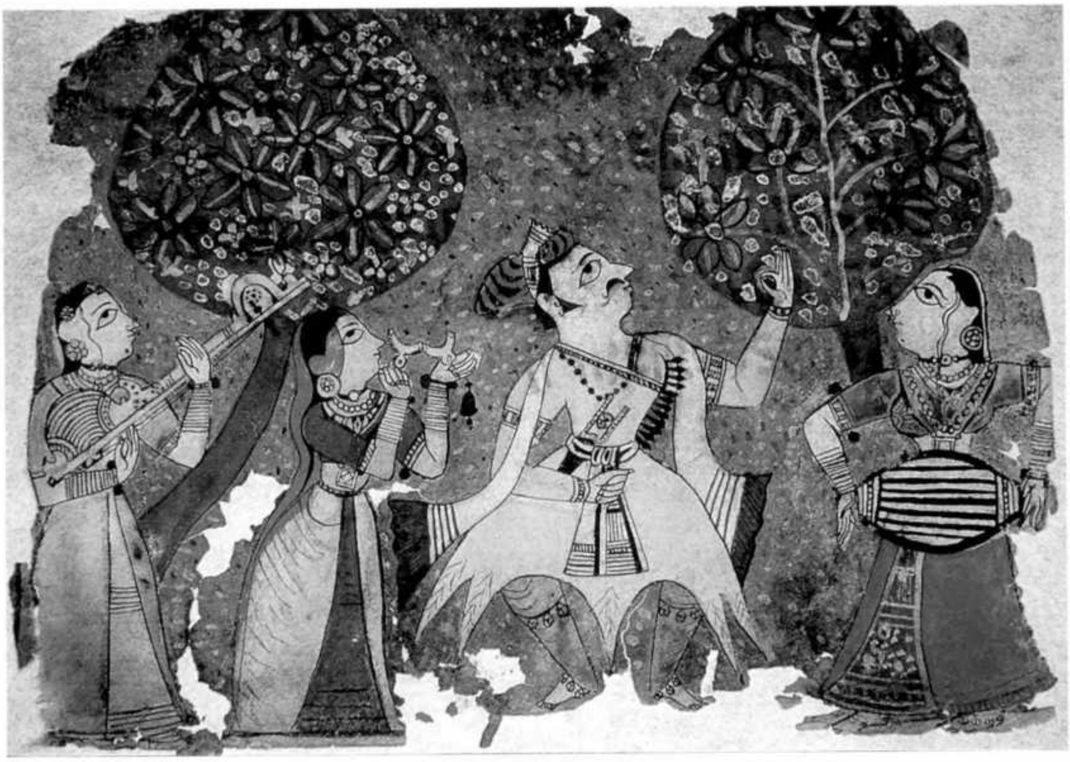
Jyotindra Jain, Senior Director, Crafts Museum, New Delhi, has published extensively on the folk and tribal arts of India.

Kavita Singh, currently Guest Curator at the San Diego Museum of Art, is organizing exhibitions from the Binney Collection of Indian Miniatures.

L.S. Rajagopalan is an expert on the performing arts of Kerala. His second book on Kutiyattam is scheduled to be published by the Kuppuswamy Sastri Research Institute, Chennai.

Syamali Das wrote her PhD thesis on Mughal carpets, and is working on a project on Mughal flowering plant motifs.

Patricia Uberoi is a sociologist at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi. She is interested in family, gender, and aspects of popular culture in India and China, and has published extensively in these fields.



Raga Megh Malhar. By Virji. Pali, Marwar, 1623. Sangram Singh family collection, Jaipur.

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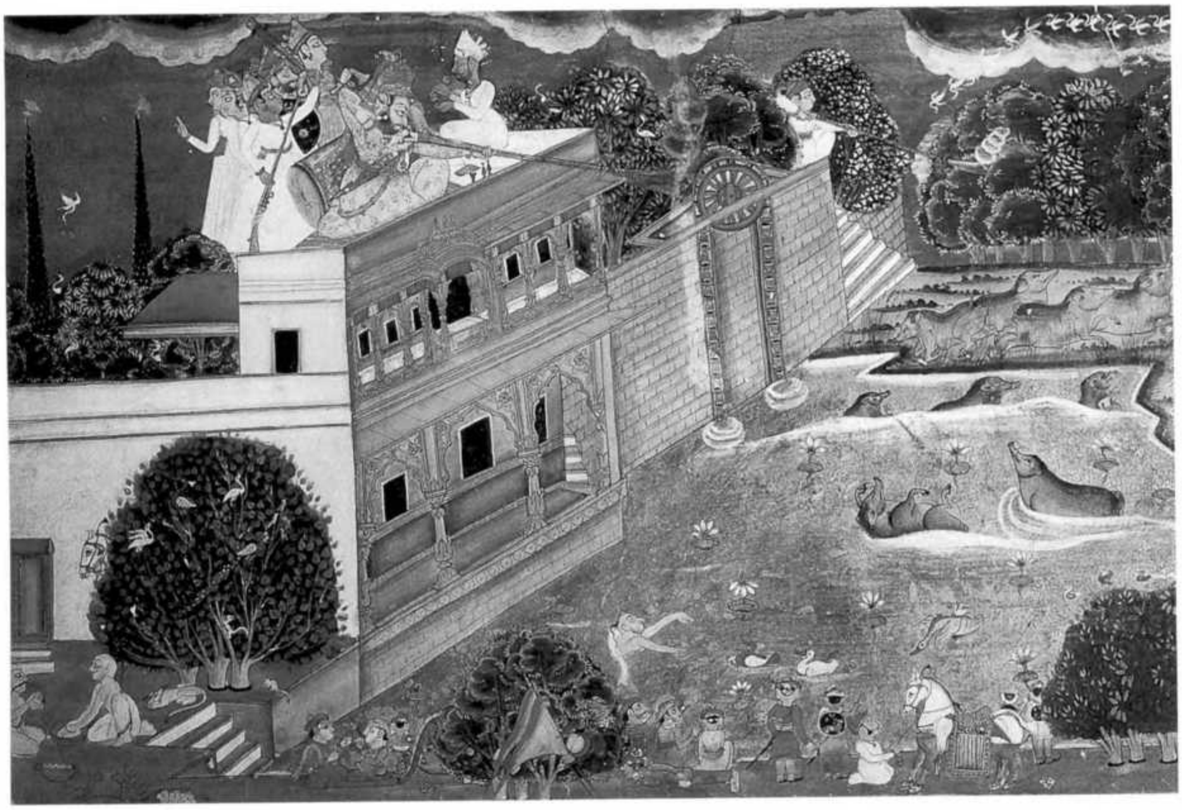

Raja Dalel Singh shooting at Gajner. Bikaner, late eighteenth century. British Museum, London.

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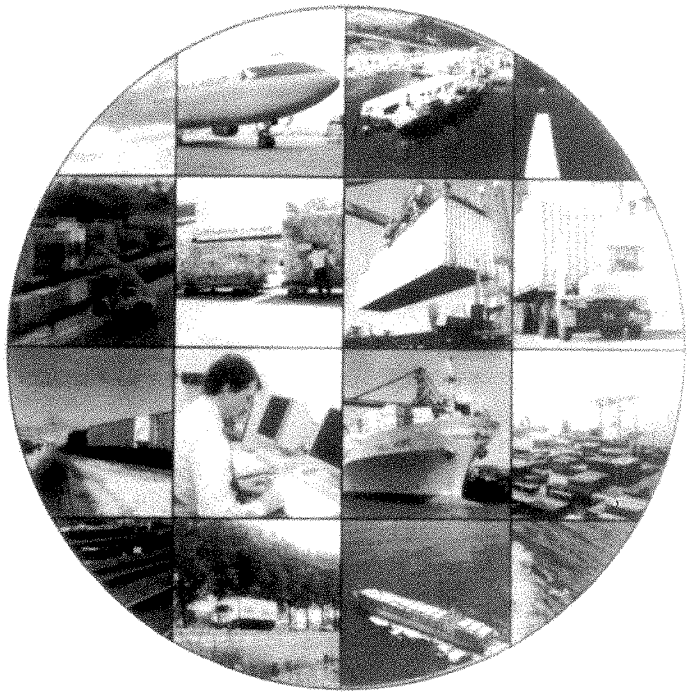

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2. Periodicity of its Publication : Quarterly

3. Name of Publisher : Mr J.J. Bhabha
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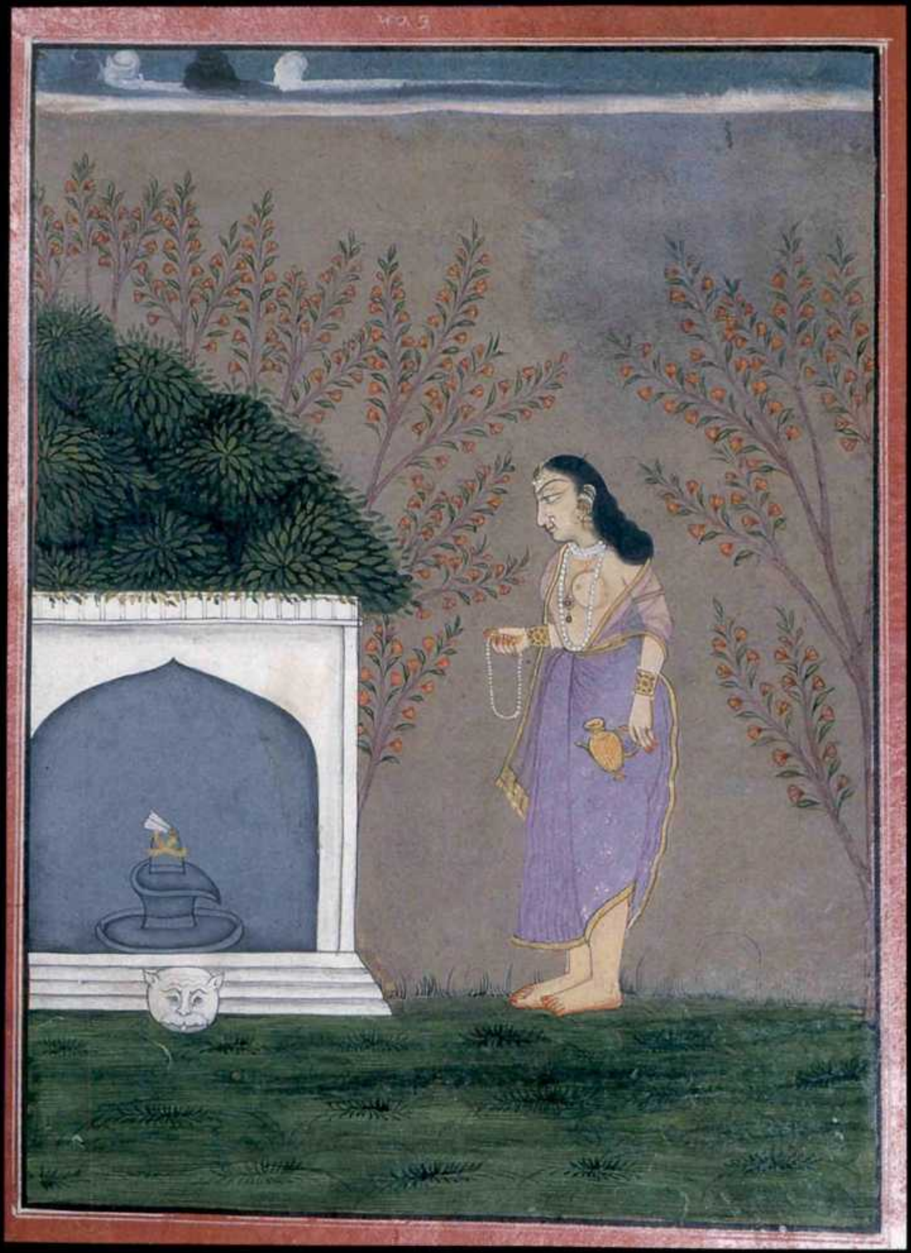

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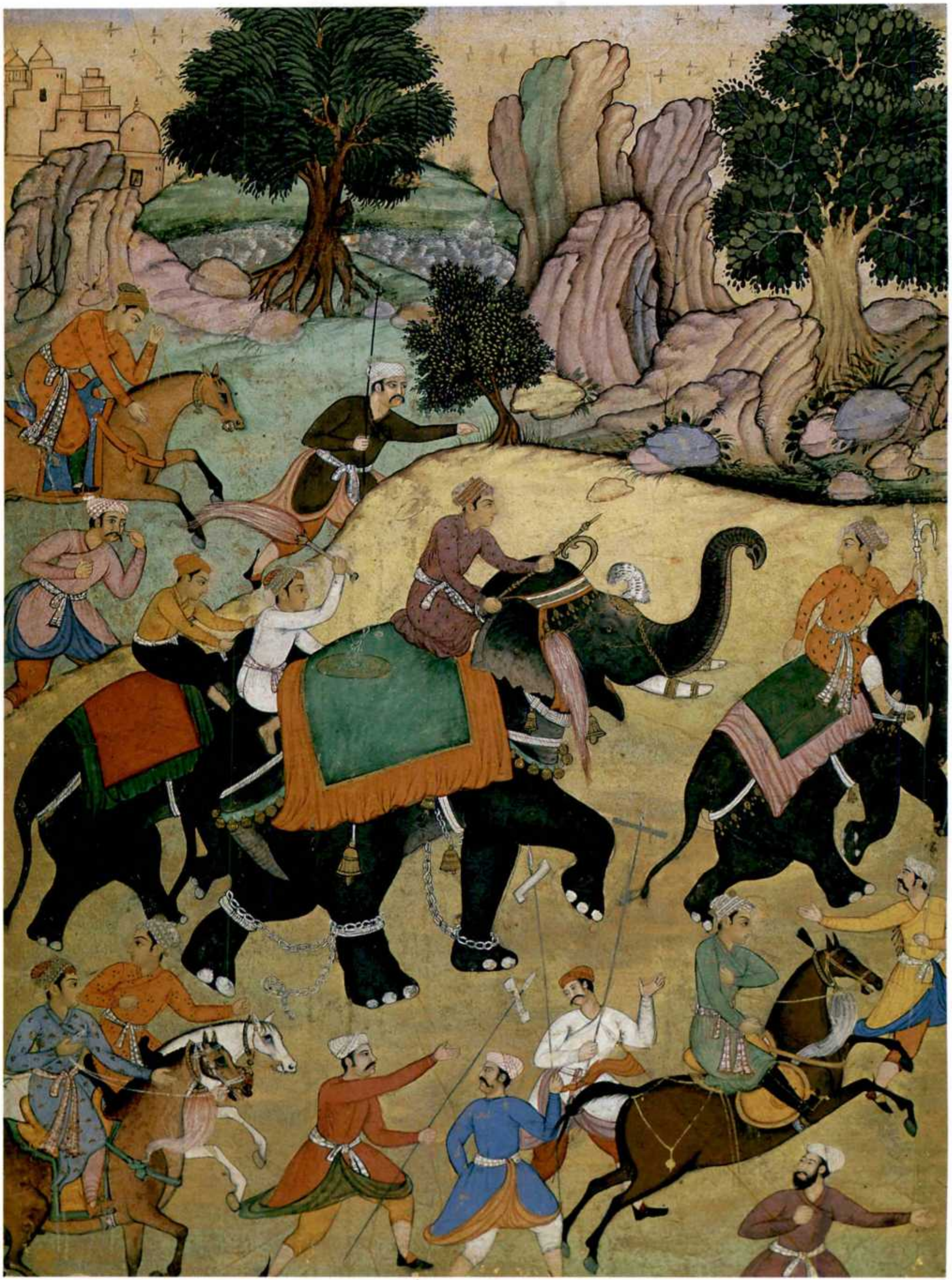

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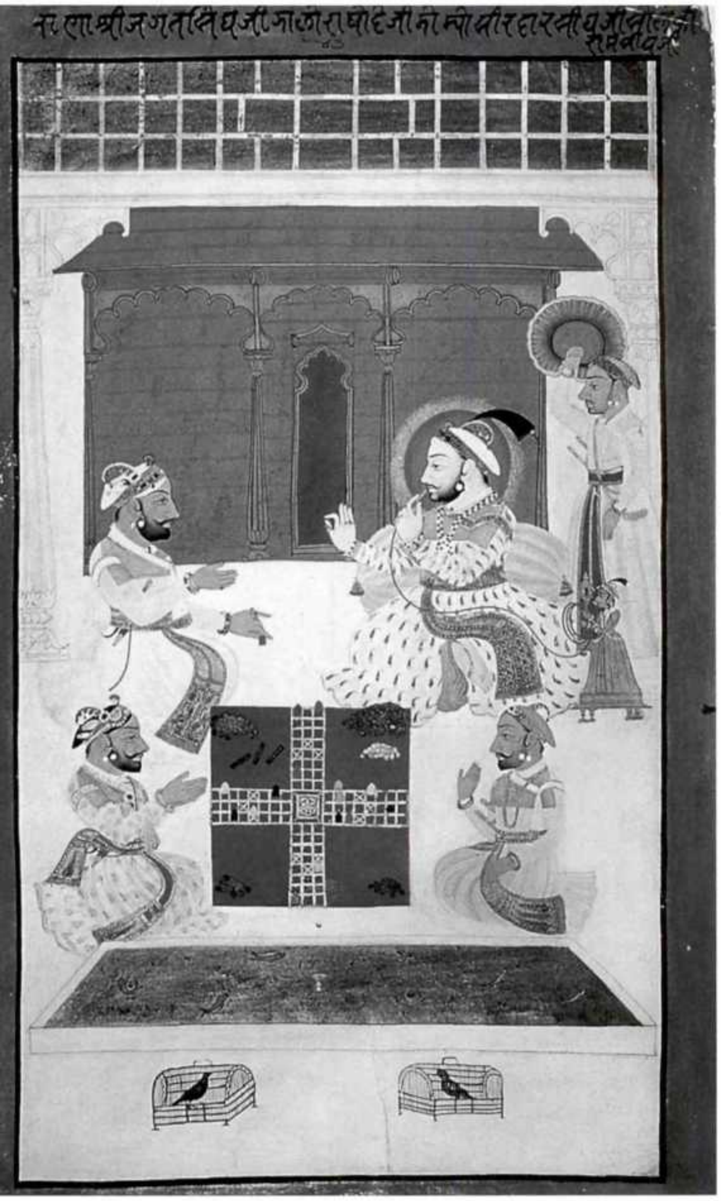

arana Jagat Singh II playing *chaupar* with his nobles. Udaipur, a 1740. Private collection.

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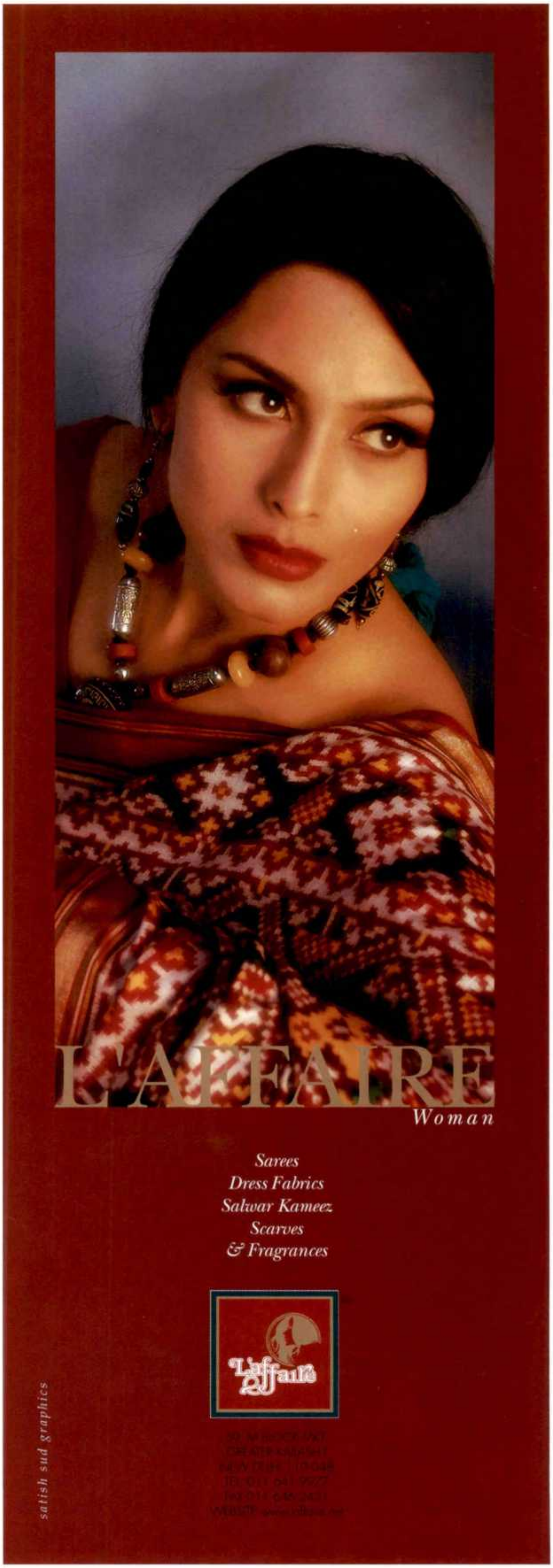

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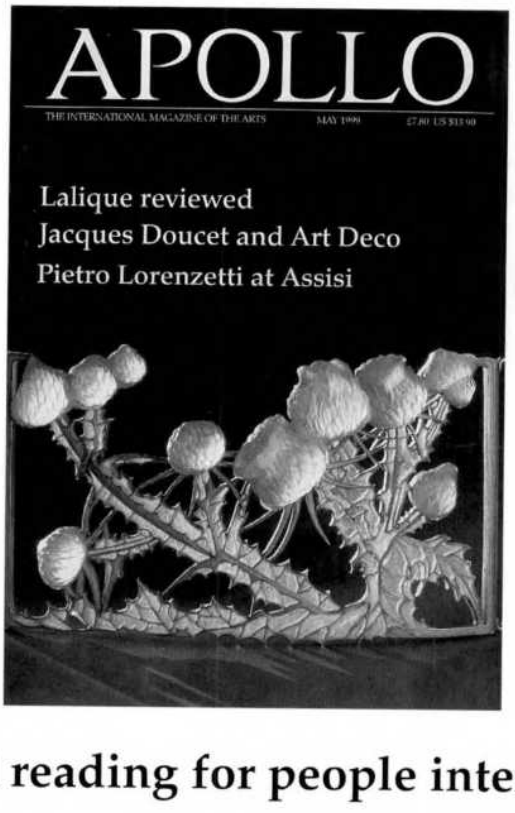

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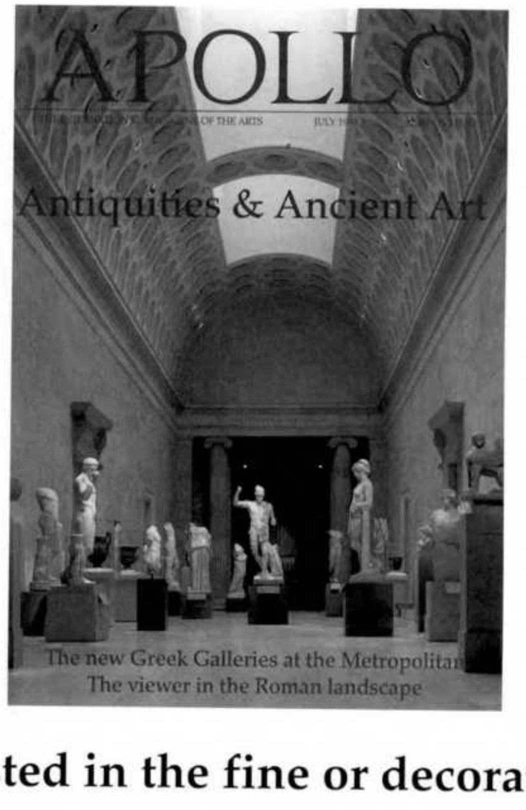

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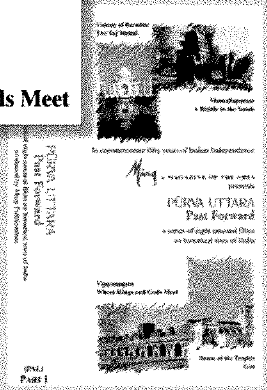

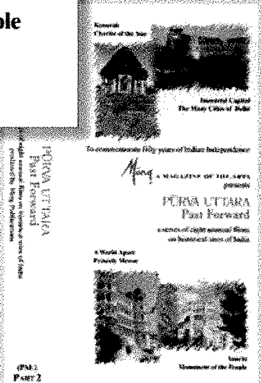

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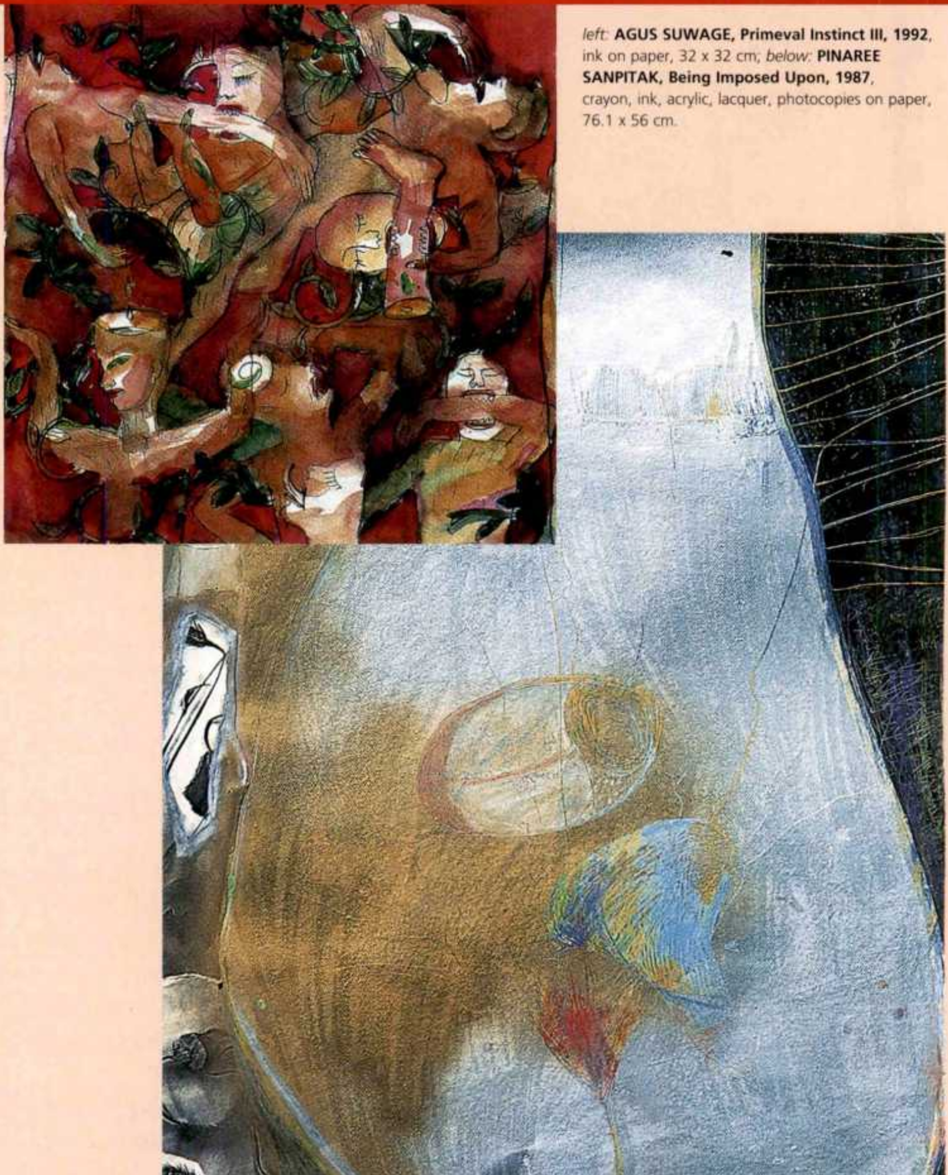

left: **AGUS SUWAGE, Primeval Instinct III, 1992**, ink on paper, 32 x 32 cm; *below:* **PINAREE SANPITAK, Being Imposed Upon, 1987**, crayon, ink, acrylic, lacquer, photocopies on paper, 76.1 x 56 cm.

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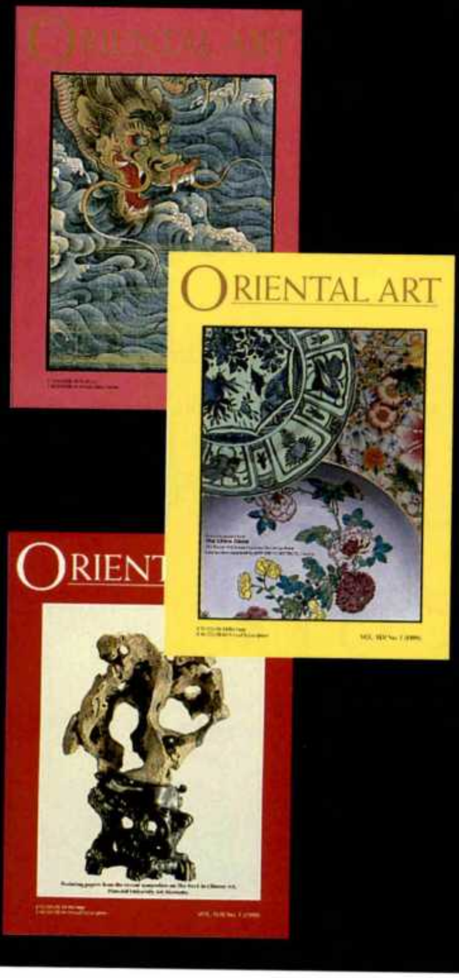

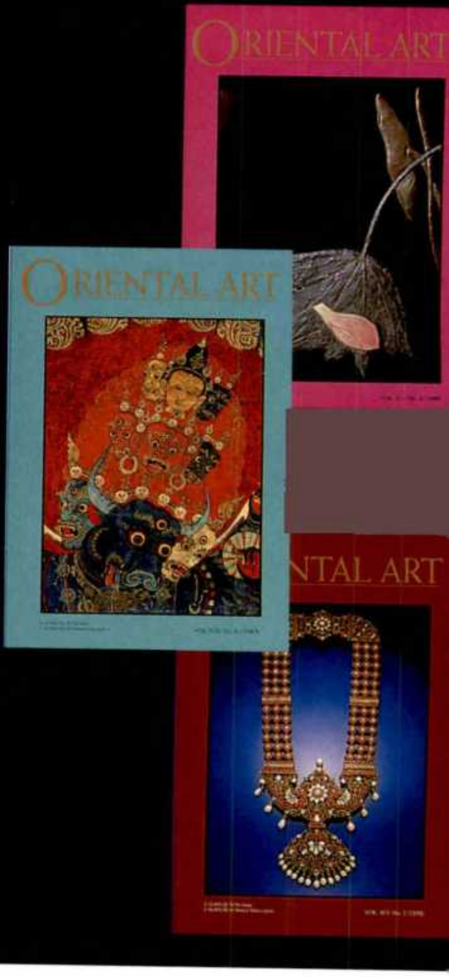

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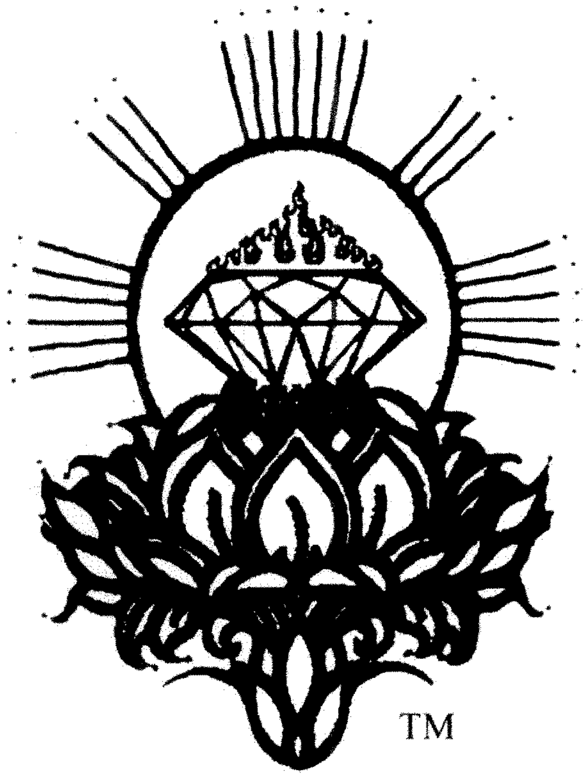

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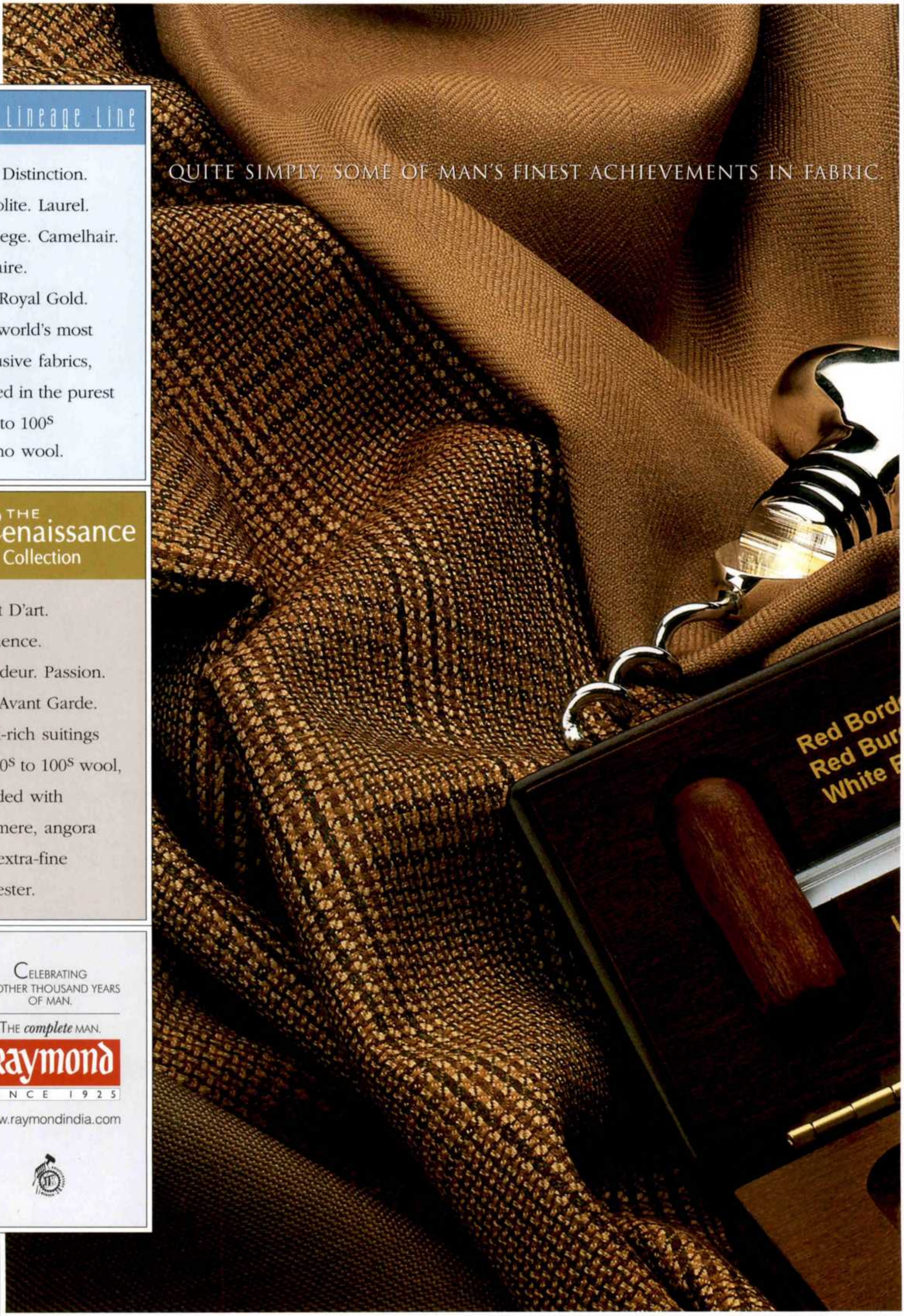
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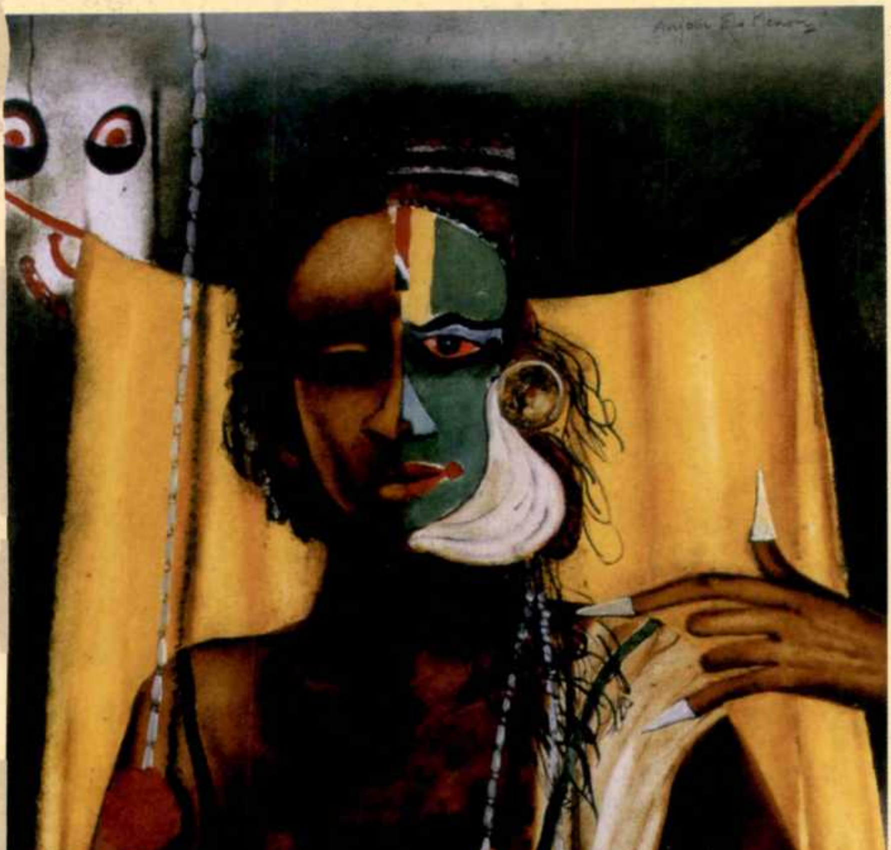

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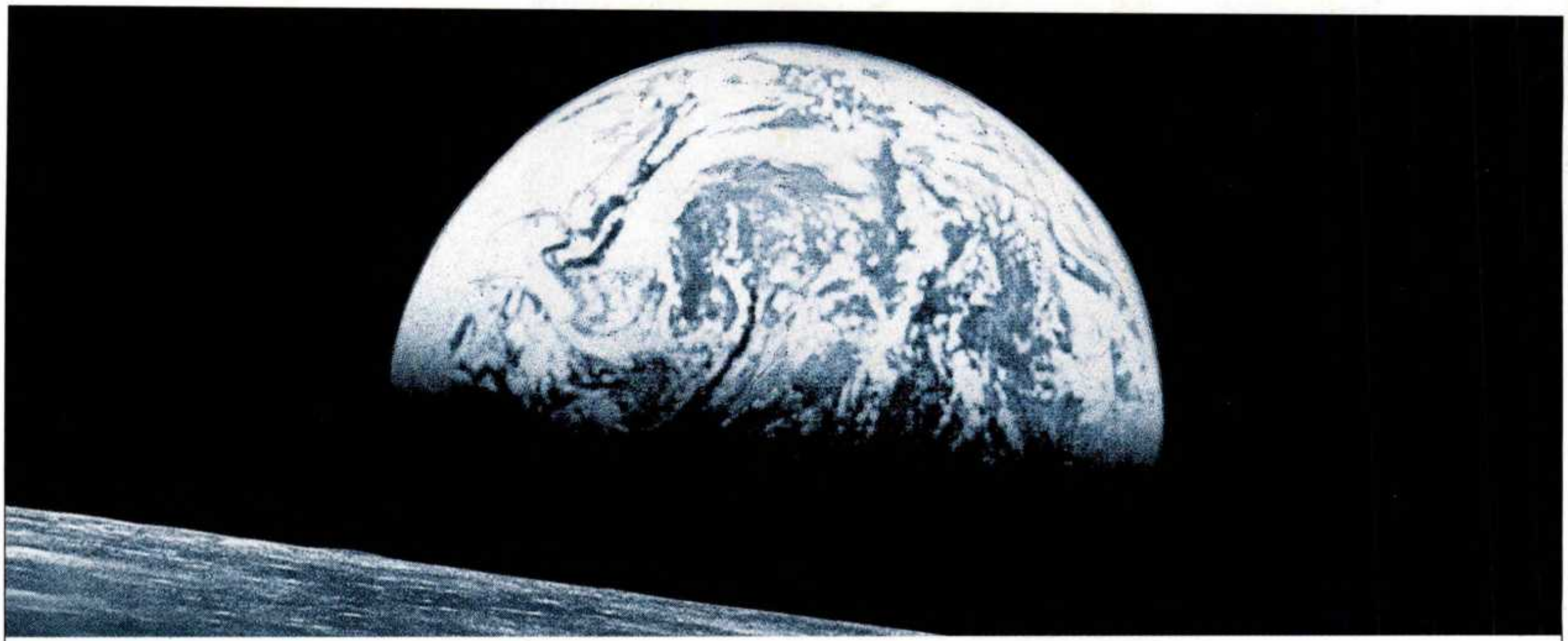

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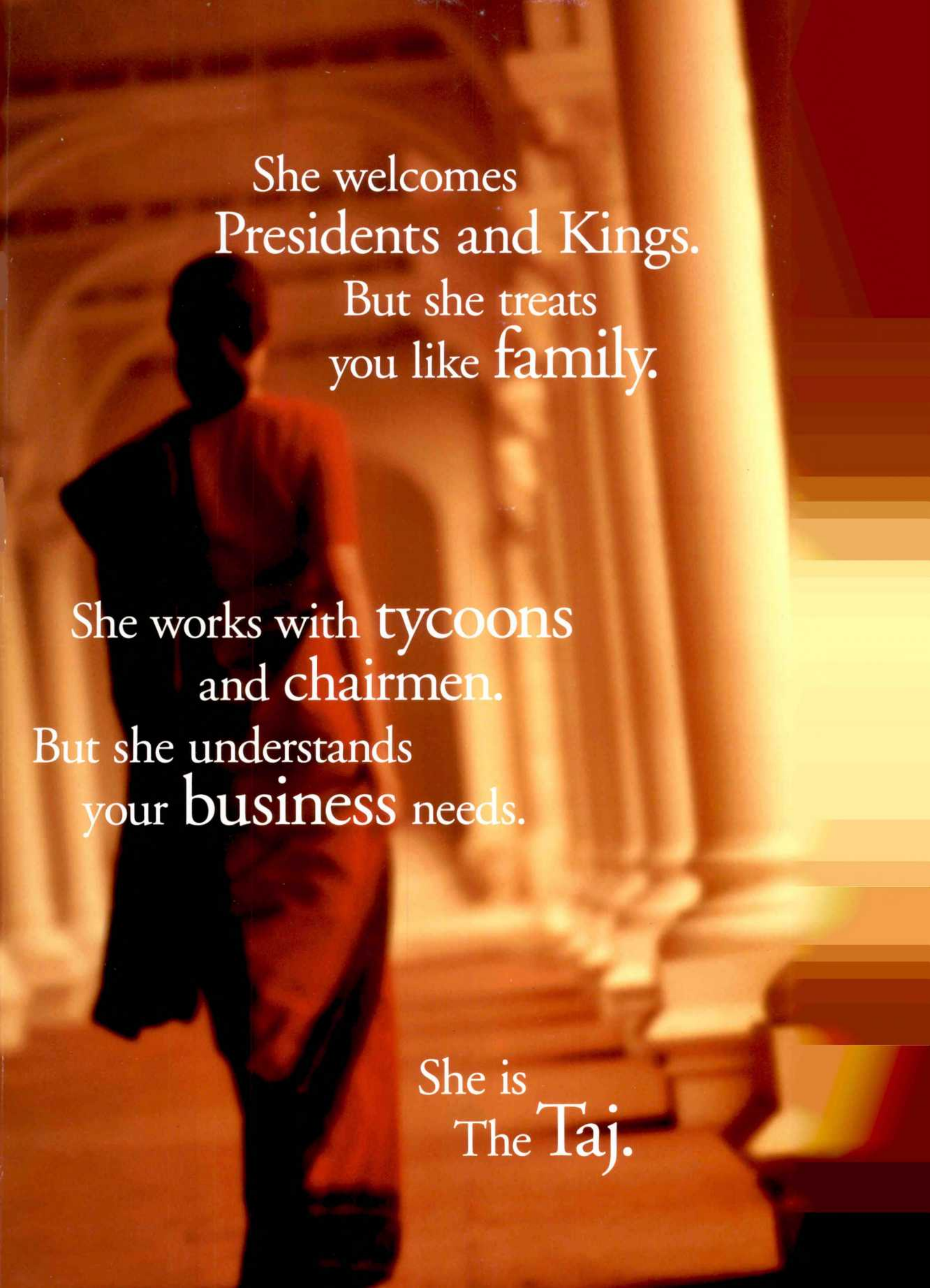
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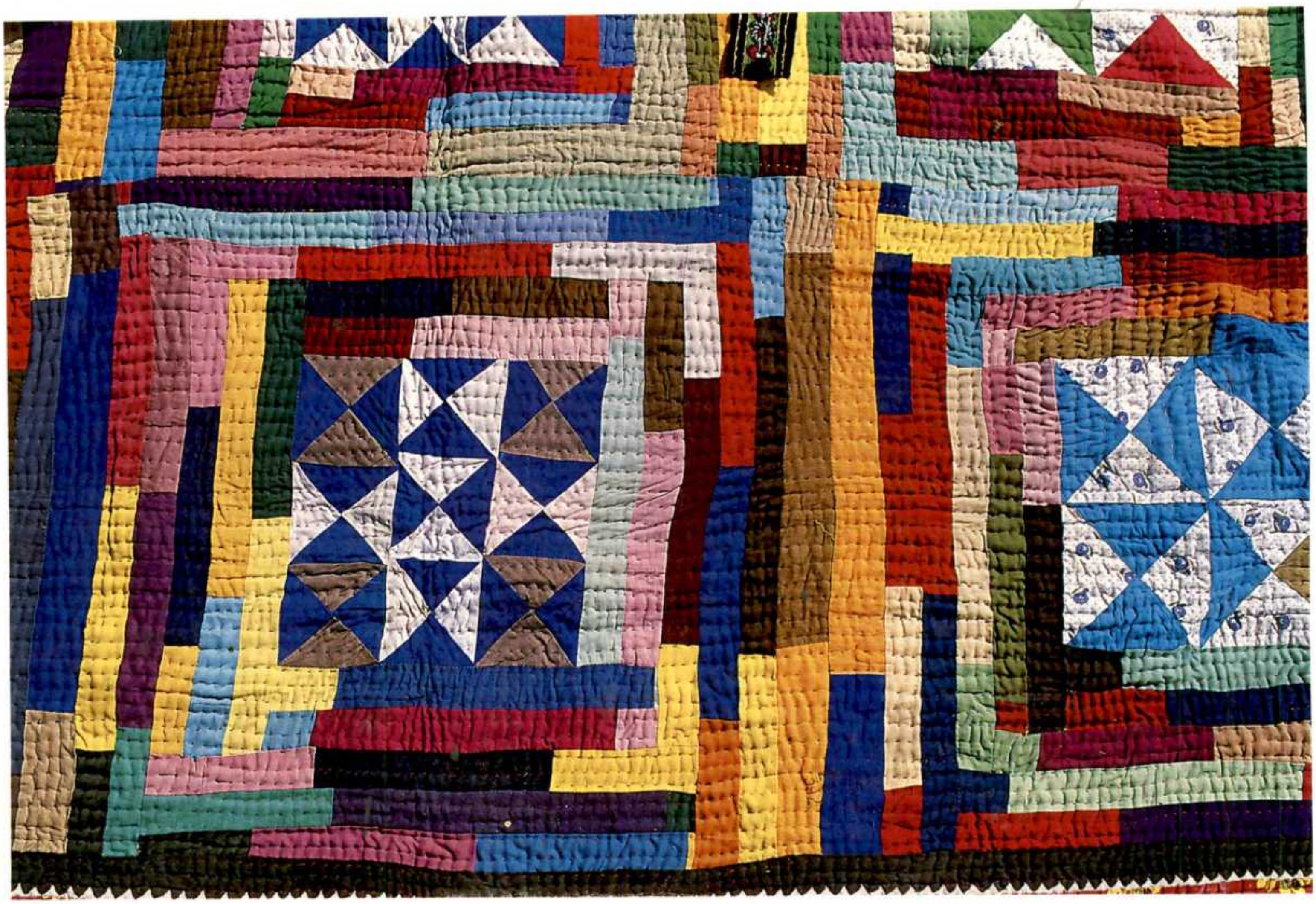

Detail of quilt made by the Maru Meghvals. Photograph: Jyoti Bhatt.

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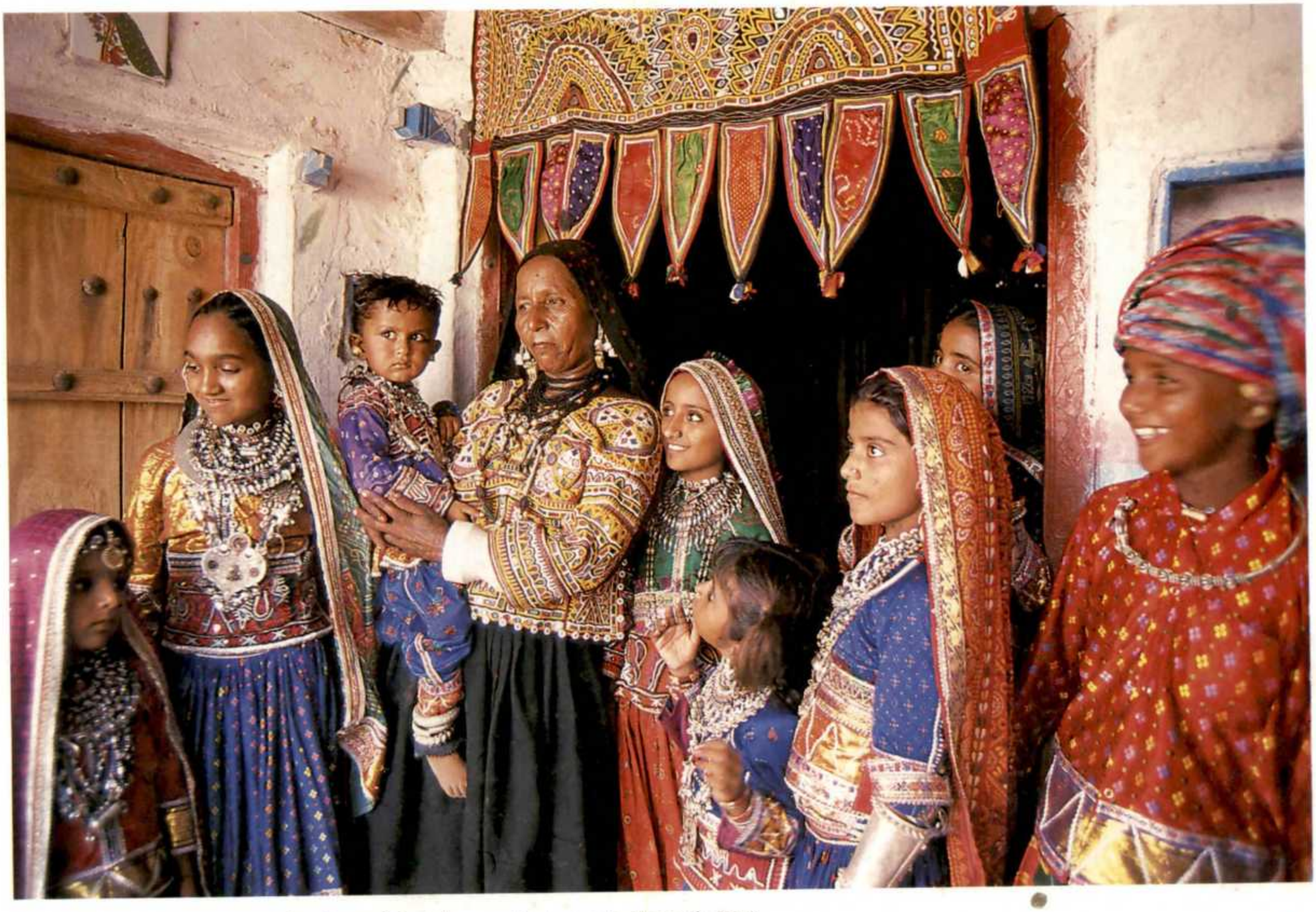

Vaagadia Rabaris posing at the door of their house. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

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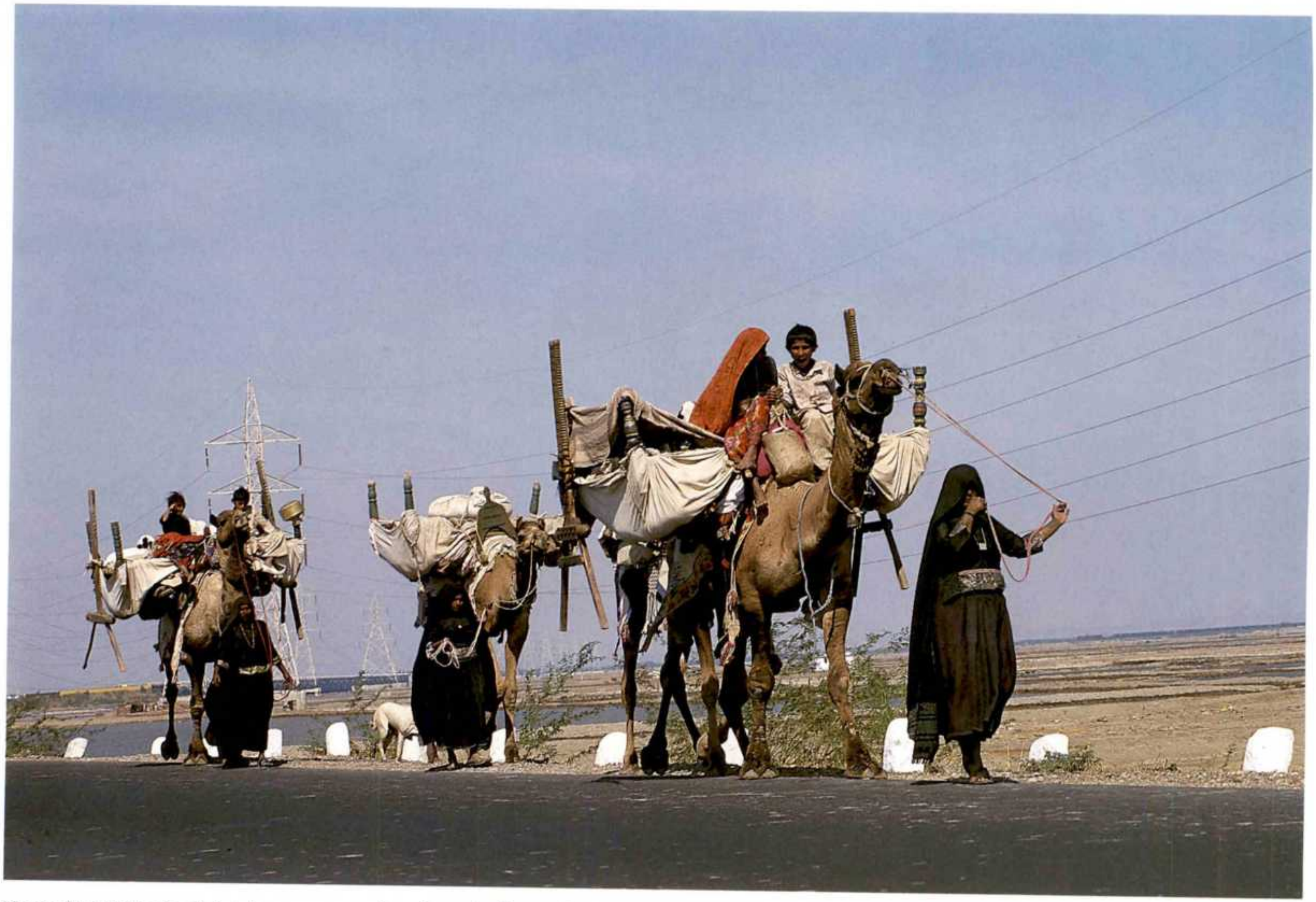
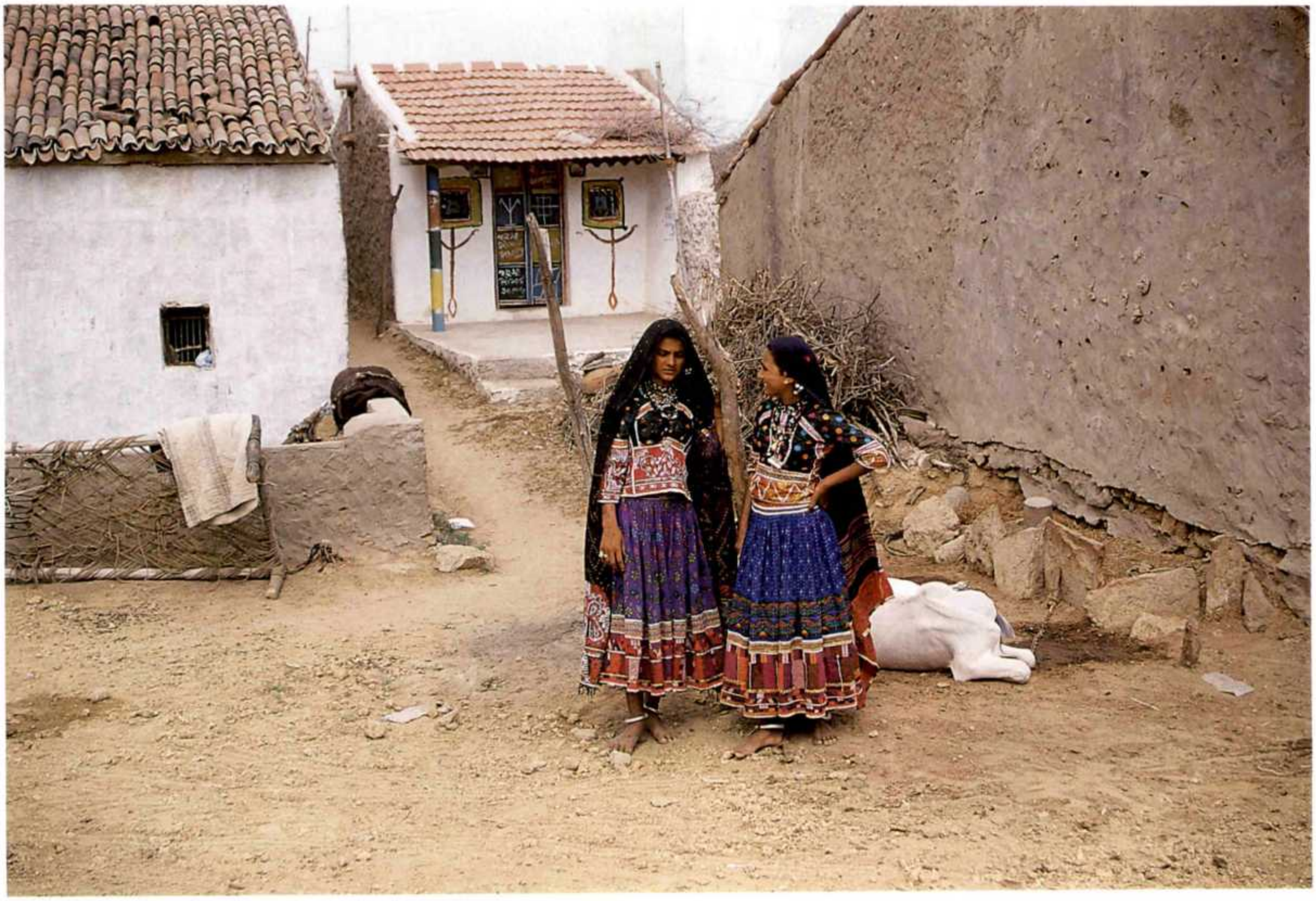
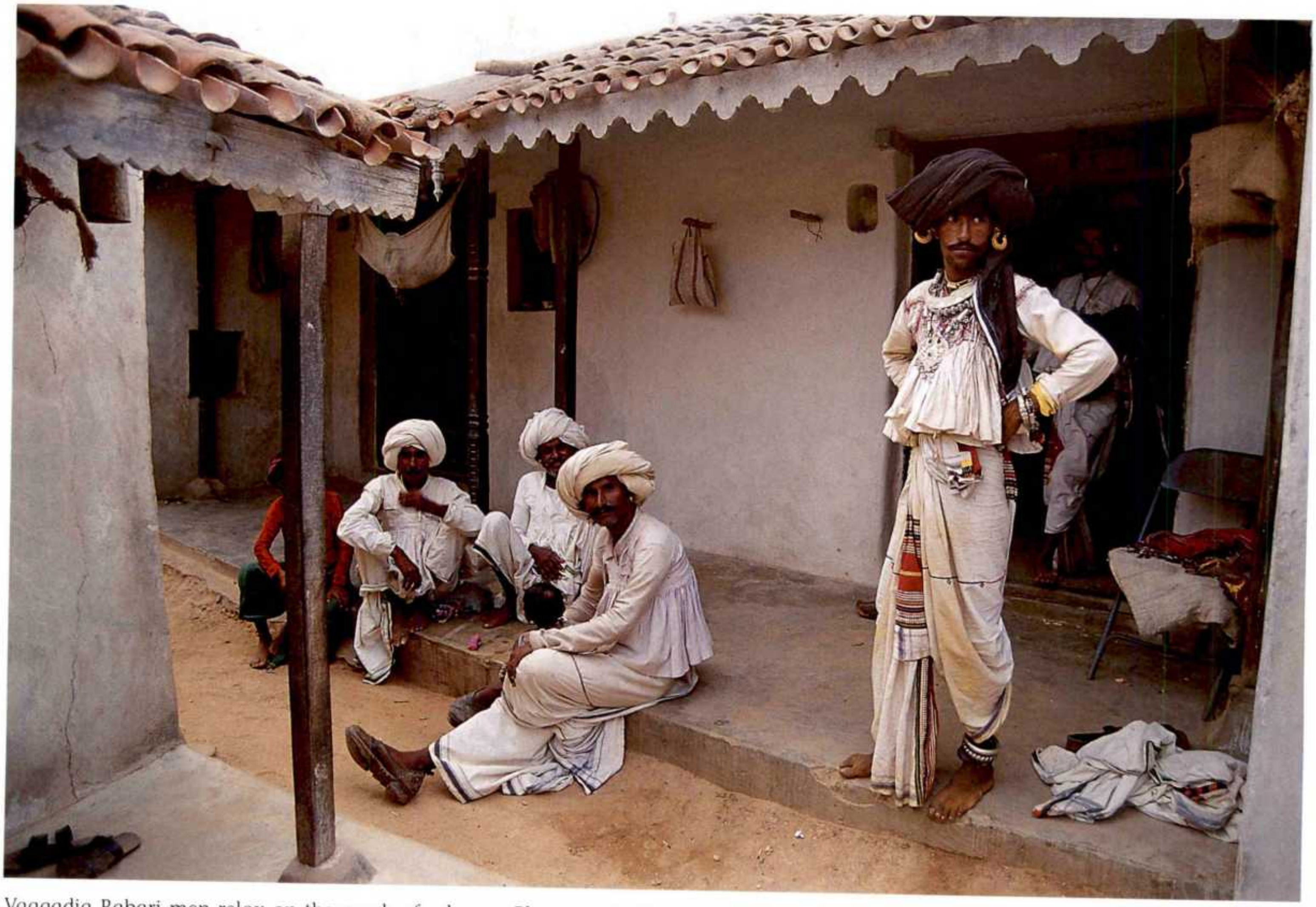


Nomadic Dhebaria Rabaris, a community where in the mid-1990s the elders banned wearing embroidery, deeming it too costly.
Photograph: Ramesh Soni/Porpoise PhotoStock.



Scene in a Rabari village in Vaagad. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.



Vaagadia Rabari men relax on the porch of a house. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

Maru Meghval women in Banni embroidering a garment. Photograph: Jyoti Bhatt.

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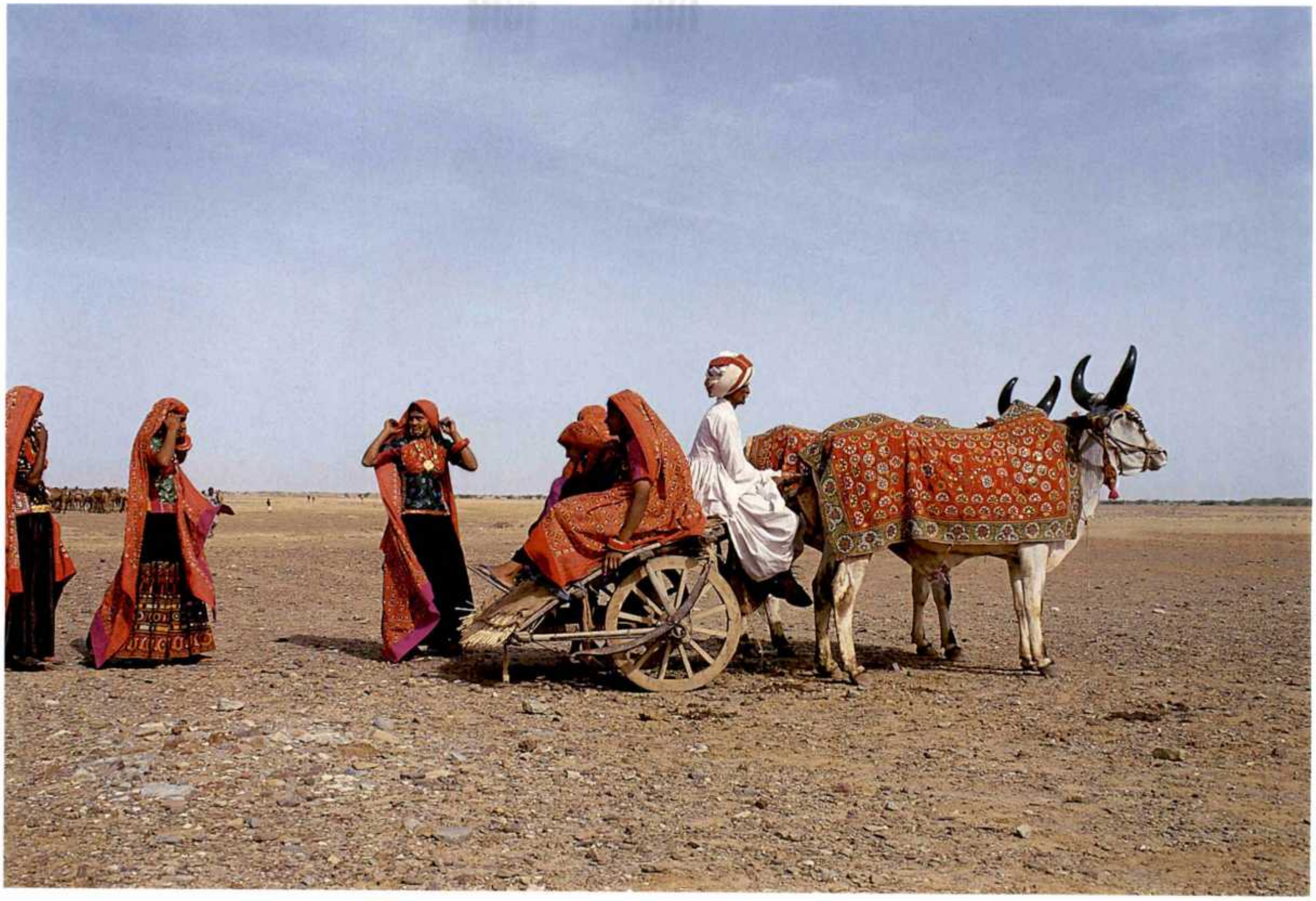
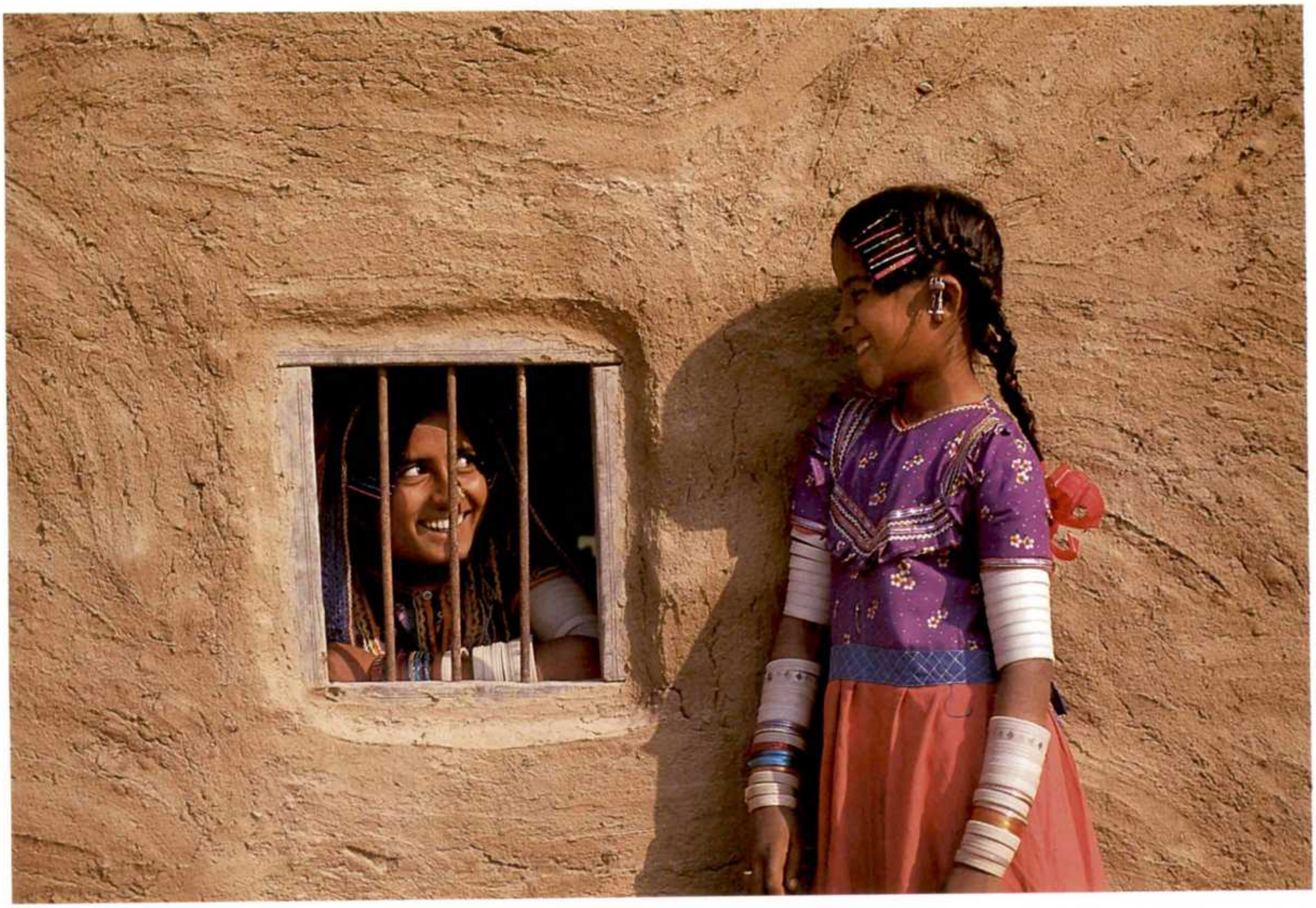


Ahir agriculturalists, originally migrants from Saurashtra, continue the embroidery styles that they brought with them. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.



Maru Meghvals of Banni. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

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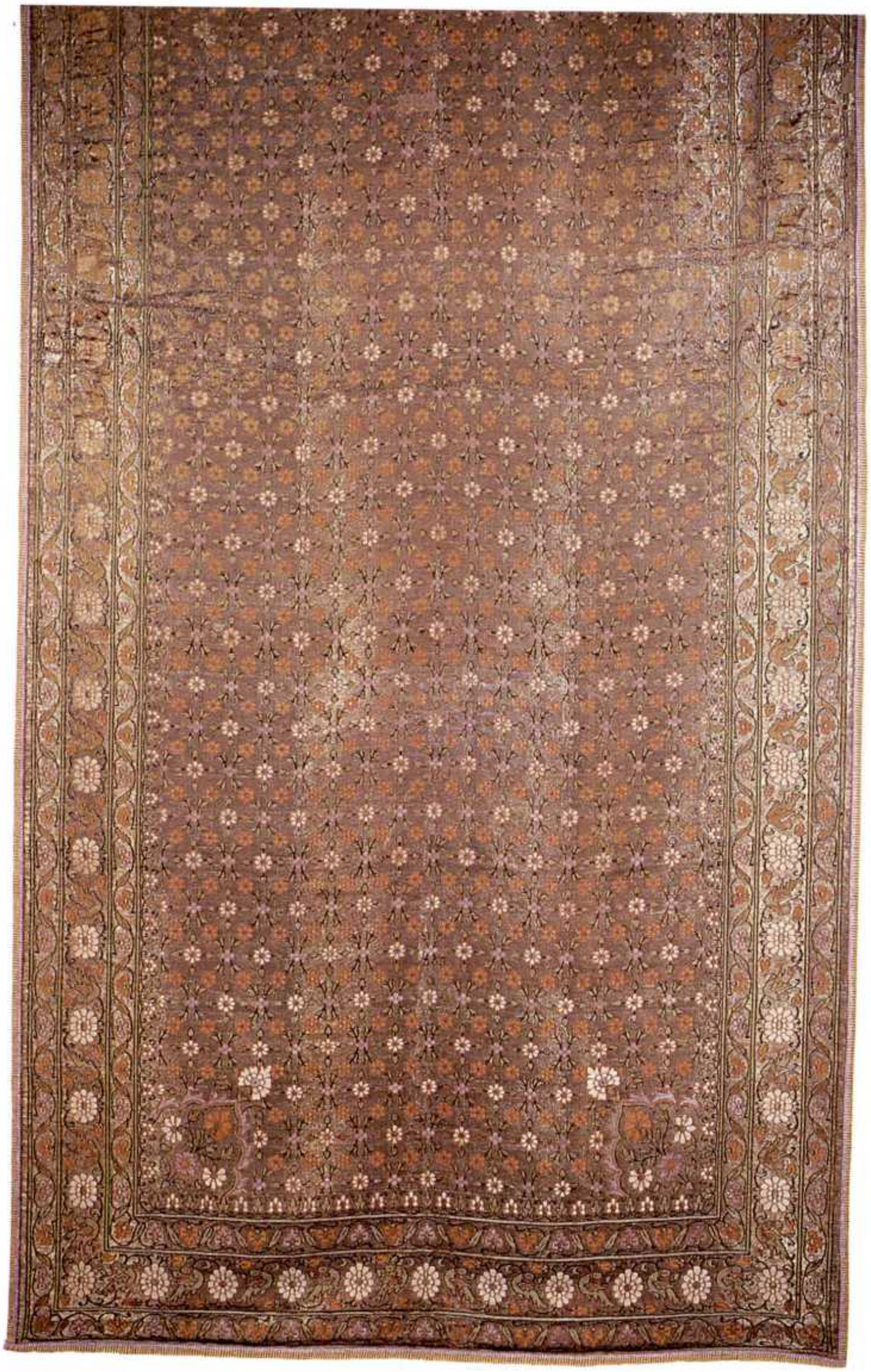

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larg Publications
rmy & Navy Building (3rd Floor), 148, M.G. Road, Mumbai 400 001, India.

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* From *The Arts of Kutch*, edited by Christopher W. London, Marg Publications (June 2000).

Cover: Detail of silver lota. Kutch, circa 1900. Actual size: 12 cm, 320 g. Private collection. Photograph: Iosif Cheretis.

This issue has been designed by Naju Hirani.

Colour and black and white processing by Reproscan, Mumbai 400 093.
Printed by A.S. Vadiwala at Tata Donnelley Limited, Mumbai 400 025, India.

FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR'S DESK

ELEMENTARY ECONOMICS, WATSON!

I would like to begin by sharing a letter with you. It is not often that we receive laudatory letters, especially from intellectual giants and hence this letter is very special to us. It was sent by Professor Amartya Sen, who was recently given the Bharat Ratna award by the Government of India upon receiving the Nobel Memorial Prize for economics from the Swedish Academy. Another feather in this cap is that he is the first person of non-European origin and a Hindu to become the Master of a college in either Cambridge or Oxford.

> I just wanted to tell you [writes Professor Sen] how tremendously impressed I am with the quality of the Marg publications that I get. They are spectacularly well-produced. I have several of them in the large living room of the Master's Lodge (where hundreds of Fellows come regularly after dinners and other functions), and I am happy to be able to tell you that your publications receive more admiring comments than any other. . . Incidentally, when the subscription runs out, perhaps I should start purchasing these wonderful publications. They also serve here to draw attention to India – past and present.
>
> Again many thanks for the quality of publications that you maintain.

We can only hope that Professor Sen's generous compliments will persuade not only some of the Fellows who gather in his living room to savour vintage sherry or port – for which Cambridge colleges are famous – but also countless others around the globe to subscribe to the publications. For, ultimately, it is economics that determines the quality of publications. In this regard we are happy to report that with the turn of the new millennium we are beginning to see hopeful signs within the country of increasing financial support for Marg publications from both the corporate sector and charitable foundations. This is extremely important for us as Marg receives no such subvention from any government agency at the federal, state, or local levels.

Our patrons may not be aware that Marg has no endowment and must derive all revenues from sales of books, magazines, and sundry publications. The books are published in order to subsidize the magazine, which has a deplorably low subscription considering that India has an educated middle-class almost as large as the population of the United States or the European community. The books in turn require a subsidy to keep the quality up and prices down. *Marg* is not merely the oldest but the only serious journal of its kind in India devoted to all the arts, architecture and design – in fact all forms of aesthetic expressions of Indian civilization – both past and present. It is hoped that more of our fellow countrymen as well as all those who are interested globally in Indian culture will help us to maintain the quality that has elicited such unsolicited admiration from Amartya Sen.

A GLORIOUS HERITAGE: MAHARAO LAKHPATJI AND THE AINA MAHAL

Pramod J. Jethi and Christopher W. London

Rao Khengarji I established Bhuj as the capital of the state of Kutch in 1548.[1] Rulers from his dynastic lineage continued to govern Kutch until 1948, when the princely states joined the "modern" Indian nation.

One illustrious successor to Khengarji I was Maharao Lakhpatji (1707–61) (figure 1). In 1741, at the age of thirty-four, he peacefully seized control of the court from his father. In 1752 Lakhpatji was finally installed on the *gaddi*, on the death of his father, the popular and versatile Maharao Desalji. However, during Lakhpatji's period as Yuvraj, he was appointed by his father to proceed to Delhi and attend a court darbar of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah.[2] This invitation marked the first meeting of the Kutch ruling family with the Mughal imperial court. Lakhpatji, who travelled by elephant and was accompanied by two hundred soldiers, reached Delhi with his entourage after six months.

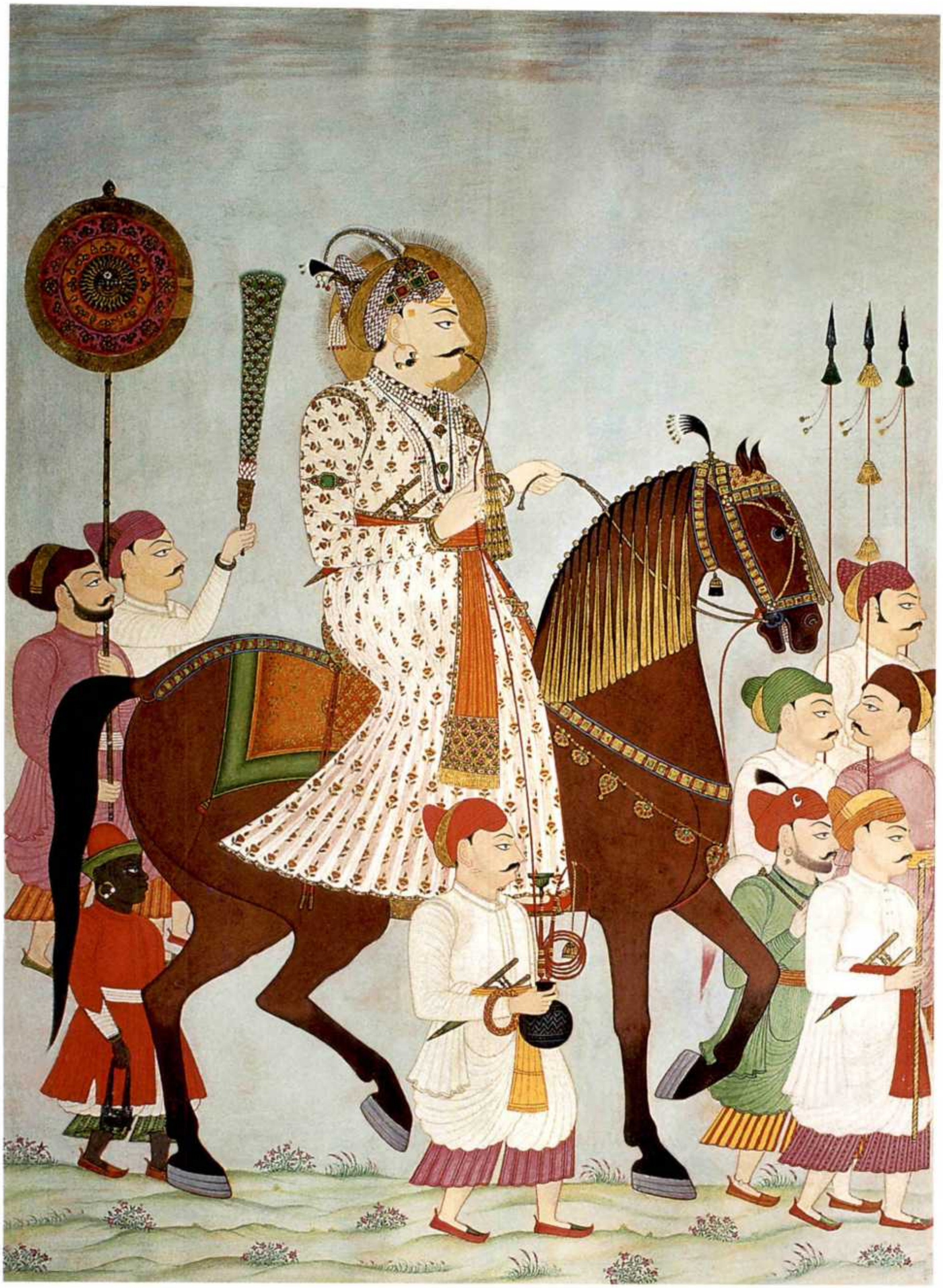
Lakhpatji's deputation was joined by several other princely legations, all of whom were invited to attend the darbar. Lakhpatji, an accomplished musician, developed a reputation for his concerts of music and dance which he held in his tent at night. These musical evenings came to the attention of the Mughal court, as the performances were attended by the emperor's dancers, who enjoyed the soirees. Lakhpatji's solo performances of classical music and dance succeeded in winning him the hearts of two Keralite musician maidens who then chose to accompany him on his return to Kutch.[3]

Lakhpatji and his party also made a favourable impression on the Mughal emperor by presenting the local grain, *bazara-milate*, and through the introduction of the famous Kutchi breed of horse, a part of his entourage, to the Delhi court. One direct result of their visit was the gift of a "golden fish", the Mahi Maratib, bestowed upon Lakhpatji by the emperor in Delhi. The "fish" was then incorporated by the Raos into an emblem which now forms part of the Kutch State coat-of-arms. The honorific title of Mirza Maharao was added to the Kutch State titles, and the Mahi Maratib itself came to be carried in state during all ceremonial *sawaris*, on the back of an elephant. The crafted golden object itself can now be viewed in the Aina Mahal Museum's first exhibition room (figure 2).[4]

LAKHPATJI AND RAMSINGH MALAM

Lakhpatji's interests and influences on Kutch also extended significantly into the various crafts manufactured within the state. When he returned from Delhi he began to build a palace at Bhuj modelled on or inspired by what he had seen at the Mughal court. Its construction entailed inviting many artists to the Kutch court. The most important and now famous of these artisans was Ramsingh Malam, who had returned from Europe at about the time Lakhpatji acceded to the throne.[5]

It is believed that Ramsingh was born in a village at Okhamandal, into the Wagher tribe, and that he became a seafarer in his very early



1

Miniature painting depicting Maharao Lakhpatji on his favourite horse. Kutch, eighteenth century. 51.5 x 36.0 cm. Photograph: T.S. Randhawa.

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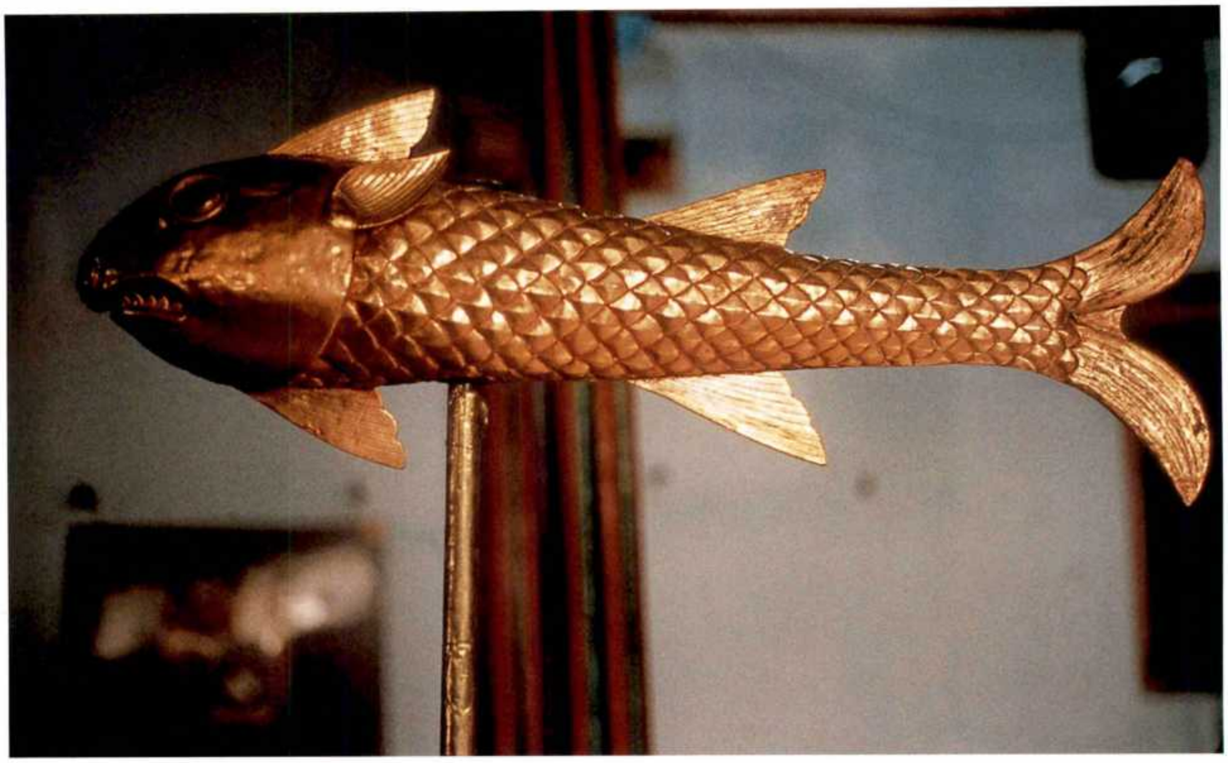


The Mahi Maratib, golden fish, which forms part of the Kutch State coat-of-arms, on display in the Aina Mahal. Photograph: Christopher W. London.

years. In the course of a voyage to Africa, his ship was wrecked at sea and Ramsingh was rescued by a Dutch vessel. The Dutch ship took Ramsingh to Holland, where he then remained for seventeen years. The journey and extended stay in Europe proved pivotal to Ramsingh's later life. While in Holland he studied architecture and the crafts of clock-making, stone-carving, tile-work production and manufacture, enamel-work, and cannon fabrication. Upon his return he was employed by Lakhpatji for the decoration of the Aina Mahal with particular emphasis on his own production of the Aina Mahal's glass mirrors.

To make the mirror-glass for the Aina Mahal, Ramsingh founded a glass factory at Mandvi where suitable sand was found for its manufacture. Ramsingh's commission to fabricate mirror-glass for the Aina Mahal marked the introduction and first use of this decorative feature within any palace at Kutch. Lakhpatji was so impressed by the enormous contribution this decorative accessory had upon the Aina Mahal's interiors that he provided support to Ramsingh for two further trips to Europe, each accompanied by two hundred Kutchi craftsmen. These trips led to further development of the arts in Kutch, all of which emanated directly from the support of Ramsingh by Lakhpatji.

LAKHPATJI'S TALENTS

Lakhpatji enjoyed particular renown on account of his reputation for intelligence and bravery. Though his musical interests have been discussed, Lakhpatji was also an excellent poet. In addition, he possessed military skills sufficient to successfully battle against Sher Buland Khan and the various rebellious jagirdars of Kutch.[6]

Maharao Lakhpatji has, since his death, become known as the great poet-king of Kutch. He founded the Brij Bhasha – Hindi variant – school of poetry at Bhuj, and he mastered Hamirdan's *Hari Pingal* prose style by 1739 – a treatise on poetry. He then went on to compose his own treatise on the same subject.

Lakhpatji also demonstrated by his own unique example how poets could be taught and inspired in this artistic medium. One direct result of this princely patronage and support of the poetic arts is the Aina Mahal Museum's very rich collection of poetry from the Kavya Shala school. This material is now stored in the museum archives, and it is catalogued and accessible to scholars for study.

Lakhpatji was also a devotee of the Shiva temple at Rameshwar, and thus he chose as his personal deity, Mahadev Sab Shiva Rameshwar. He coupled these devotions with dedicated assistance to the naked sadhus of the Samb-Shiva cult (all of which should be interpreted as amplifying further his reputation for fierceness and fearlessness). Lakhpatji chose these religious allies as they relate to the legend that Bhuj was founded on the head of a celestial serpent deity. In order to keep this deity pleased, the Rao created and participated in a large procession. Until 1948, this annual Nagapanchami Sawari continued to take place on *Shravan sud 5* – or the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Shravan – and worship was held at the serpent's abode atop Bhujia hill.[7] Further documentation of Lakhpatji's religious devotion comes from his involvement with Kanak Kushal. Kushal was a priest born at Kishangarh in Rajasthan. Lakhpatji brought Kushal to Bhuj to serve as his guru.

Though the Rao was deeply religious and used his state's military might to preserve his kingdom, he was also a liberal and enlightened ruler of his time, treating his own subjects well. Thus, upon inheriting the title of Maharao in 1752, Lakhpatji issued a famous proclamation outlining a series of liberal "rights" which he intended his administration to uphold. The declaration was engraved on a copper-plate and placed on the bazaar police post of Bhuj, where it can still be read.

Yet, the most enduring and easily experienced legacy of Lakhpatji's reign is the palace he constructed. The Aina Mahal Museum is

3

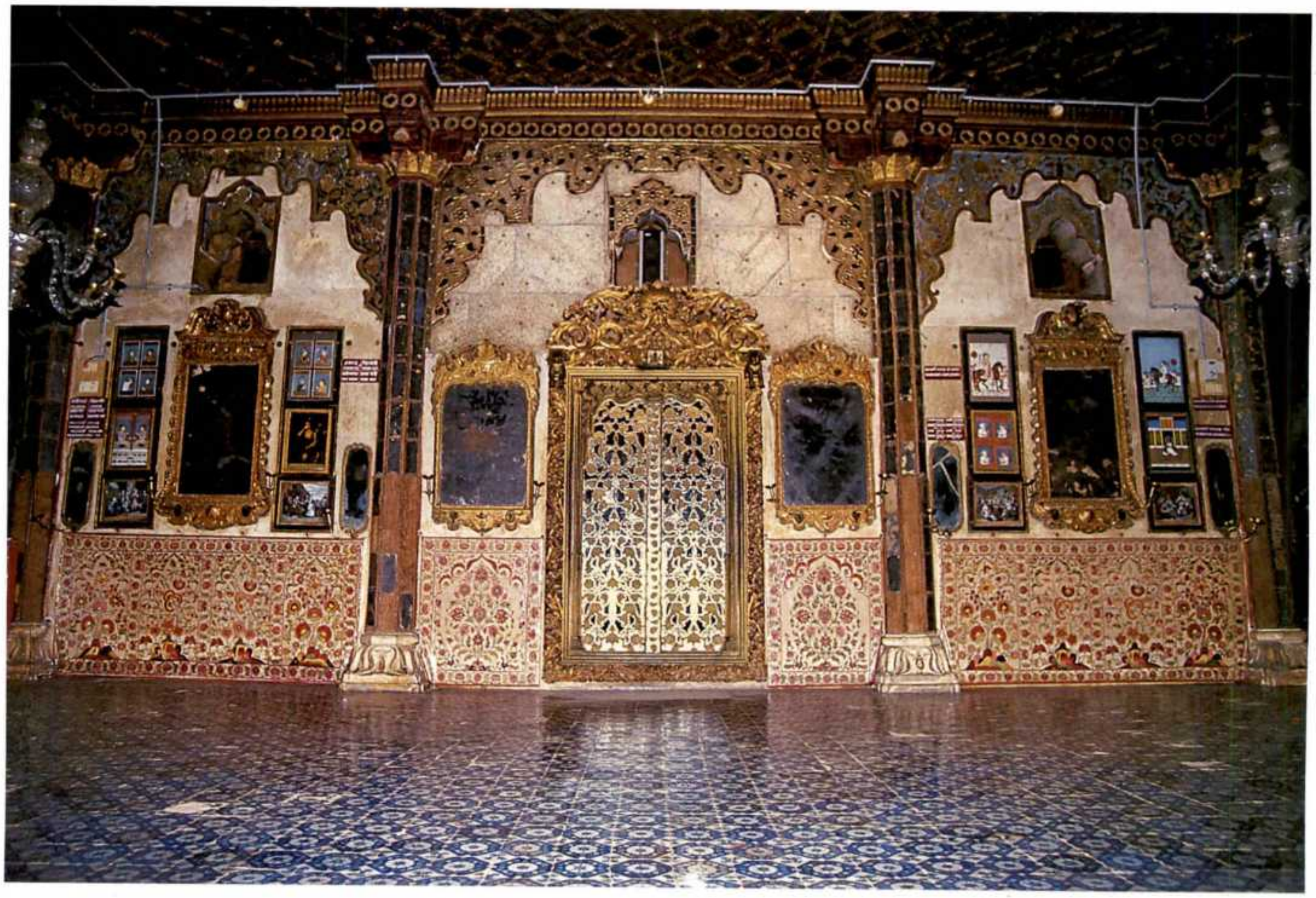
The Aina Mahal, Old Darbargadh Palace complex, Bhuj. Photograph: Jyoti Bhatt.

Lakhpatji's most visible architectural and cultural contribution to Bhuj. The Aina Mahal now forms part of a larger palace complex (figure 3). It is joined to related palace buildings through a series of gateways and courtyards. The museum itself has an interior court as well, but such details are not visible from the exterior, where one approaches the entrance up a stair and enters the palace through an arcaded veranda.

THE AINA MAHAL

The Aina Mahal which consists of a large two-storey stone mansion, now painted with whitewash and decorated with beautiful stone-carving and fine wooden fretwork, was built about 1750. The chief rooms on the first floor are an Audience Hall, the Hall of Mirrors where entertainments with dancing girls were held, and the State Apartments. The whole building cost Rs 20 lakh to construct, or more than 80 lakhs of koris, equal to more than three years' revenue of the crown lands of Kutch during this period.[8] The palace floor surfaces were covered with blue delftware tiles made under Ramsingh's guidance at Bhuj (figure 4). The white marble walls of the palace interior were covered with mirrors, each section separated by gilded ornamental frames. The mirrorwork was further adorned with fitted shelves upon which to display both glass and ceramic figures and vessels. The rooms were lit with elaborate Venetian pendant candelabra and chandeliers imported into Bhuj by Ramsingh.[9] The roof and pillars were decorated with rich gold mouldings and other ornaments, and the small spaces between the walls and pillars were fitted with compartments of triangular mirrors. The overall decorative effect is one of lively colours and extreme opulence (see the next article). Thus,

4



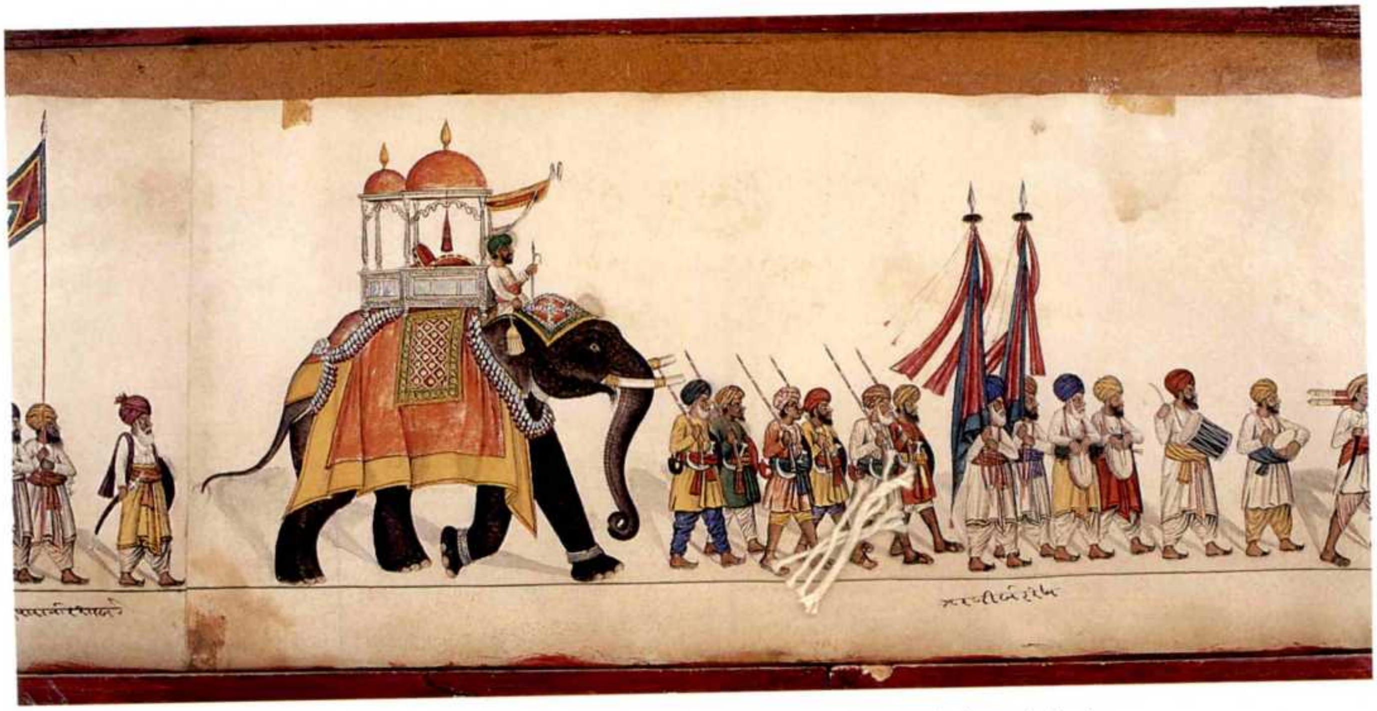
Photographic view of the Hira Mahal doorway within the Aina Mahal. Note inset eighteenth-century European mirrors, Ramsingh Malam's elaborate mirror-glass columns, door-case and doors, and his blue delftware tile floor; also the dado decorated with *aari* work. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

in rooms intentionally darkened against the glare, dust, and burning heat of the world outside, an exuberant and exotic opulence is established for the court and the ruler's entertainment. Through the employment of such formal architectural effects in tandem with the general splendour of his court and its grand ceremonial darbars, Lakhpatji was able to demonstrate the tangible difference between the Maharao and the Jadeja bhayyads (fraternity of nobles) who might have challenged him.[10]

The Museum Collections – First Floor

Upon entering the first gallery of the Aina Mahal, visitors find on the side wall to their right a highly unusual and beautifully coloured scroll painting, fifteen metres long and twenty-two centimetres wide. The work authentically depicts in minute and accurate detail each section of a Kutch "state" parade procession, in its proper sequence. The painting opens, at the head of the procession, with a mounted Arab cavalier, drummers, a standard bearer, Arab foot soldiers, a cannon drawn by a pair of bullocks, a group of lancers, a chariot of the mother goddess (family deity), and a group of camel riders. Moving left, towards the centre of the scroll, is depicted Maharao Shri Pragmalji II (r. 1860–75), seated in all his dignified splendour on the howdah of a well-decorated elephant. The portrayal of the Maharao's individual characteristics, especially his face, is handled with the skill and subtlety of a miniature painter. Each person in the procession is individually treated. The style and variety of the costumes depicted are also studied in the most minute detail, making the ethnic identity of each participant obvious as well (figure 5). Thus, the scroll accurately documents the period and historic event depicted in an aesthetic and technically virtuosic manner. Moreover, as it is signed, dated, and measured by the painter Juma Ebrahim, it serves as a unique historic resource of the period, clearly intended to impress the viewer with both the court's splendour and the artist's talents.[11]

The procession painting also provides further utility to the attentive observer. The work is an excellent object with which to open the visitor's mind and imagination to the splendour of court life at Kutch, captured and revealed by the historic collections and intact room decorations which lie beyond in the Museum's tour circuit (figure 6). For

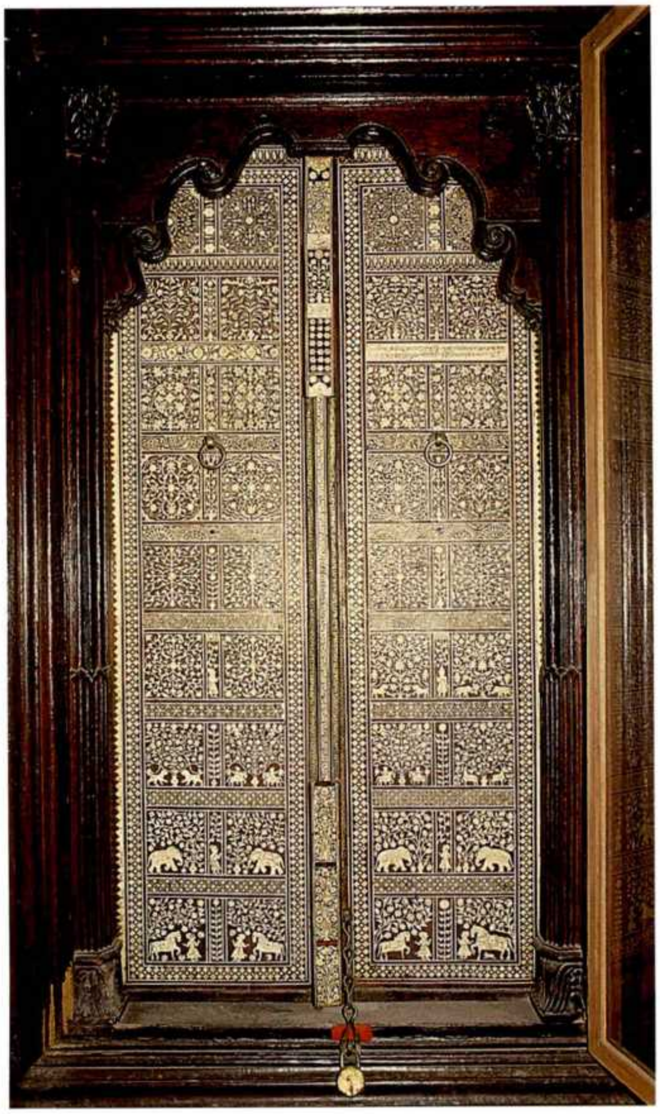


5

Detail of the royal procession painting. By Vadha Juma Ebrahim, Bhuj, 1876. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

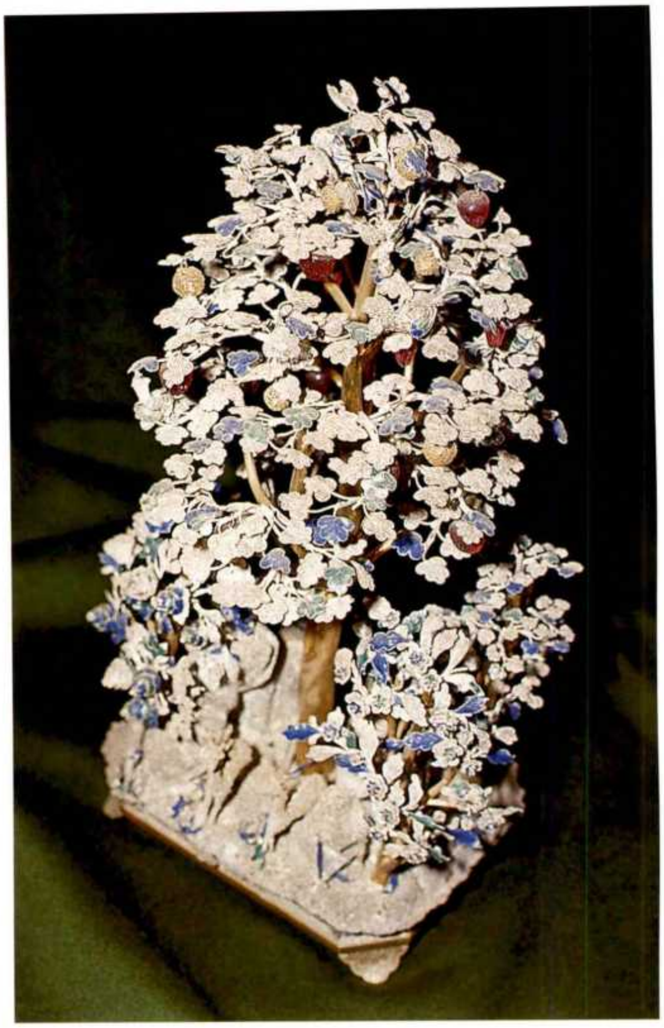
the Aina Mahal Museum is bursting with exquisite collections of costumes, ceramics, furniture, and associative material from the court life of Kutch in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (figures 7 and 8).

The State Apartments also contain a fine collection of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Dutch and English chiming bracket and grandfather clocks.[12] One unusual item in the collection is a grandfather clock, made at Bhuj, with a highly sophisticated technical movement. The clock contains a mechanism with calendar work made by Shri Morarji Lakhamshi Soni, and is dated 1839. The clock is still in working condition, and it accurately records the day-month-year solar and lunar positions (see Jaffer, figure 8).



6

Ivory inlaid doors made by the carpenter Madho in 1708. 114 x 195 cm. Photograph: T.S. Randhawa.



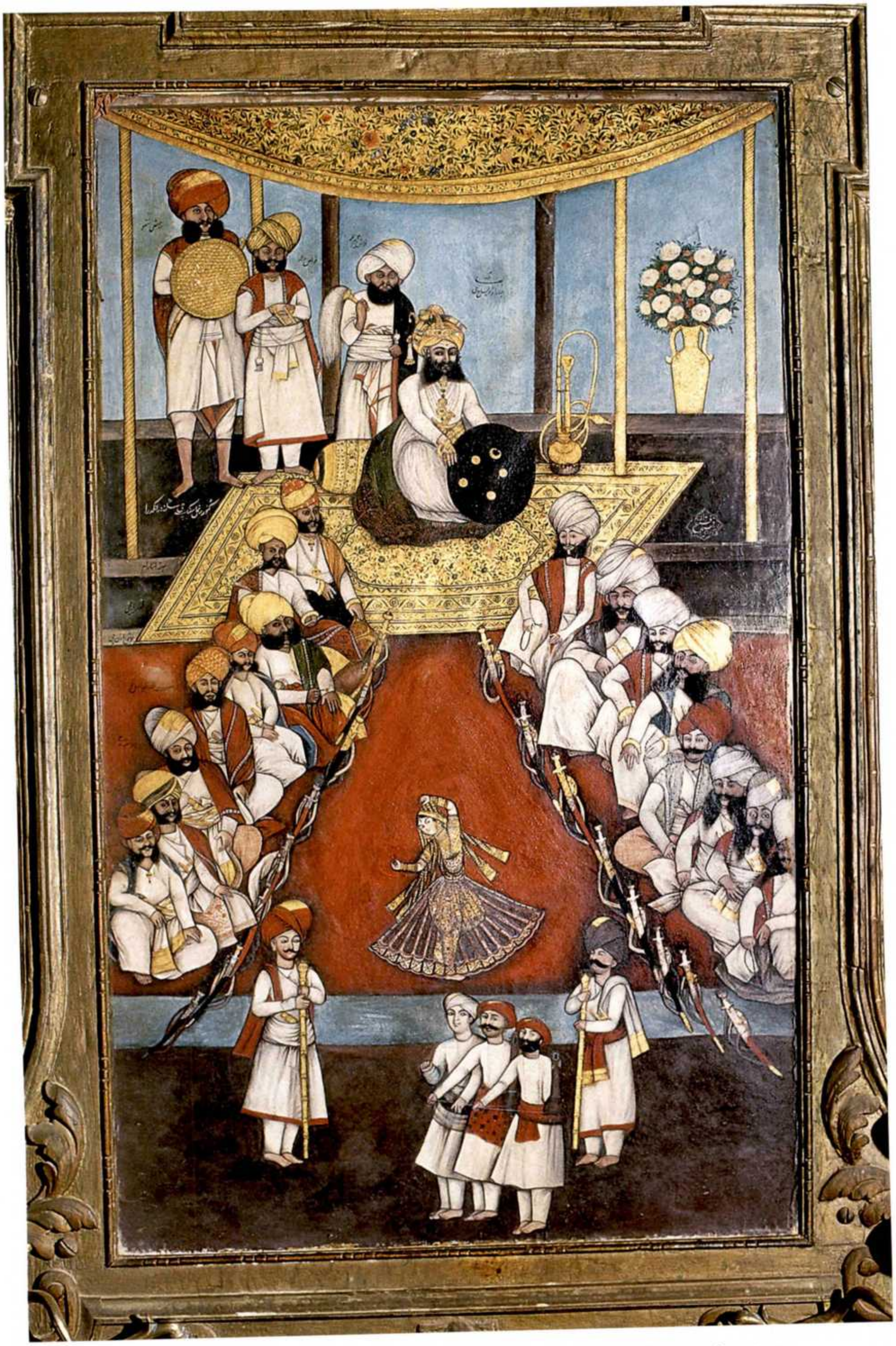
7

A silver and enamel-work tree of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century manufacture. Photograph: T.S. Randhawa.

The Aina Mahal also houses a fine picture collection. This was acquired by Ramsingh during his various visits to Europe. The State Apartments contain British, Flemish, and Italian subjects, intermingled with portraits of the princes of Kutch, and other portrait works. Some of the portraits are unusual, they include: Rana Ranjitsingh of Mewar, Empress Catherine the Great of Russia, Raja Bukhtsingh of Marwar, and Hogarth prints from *A Rake's Progress* and related moralizing series.[13]

Hira Mahal

Close to the Hall of Mirrors and its reception area, is the State Bedroom or the Hira Mahal (see figure 4). Centrally located on this floor of the Aina Mahal, in a room 4.6 x 7.3 metres, it



8

Miniature painting showing a darbar of Rao Desalji II (1819–60) with his courtiers. Nineteenth century. 134.5 x 63.5 cm. Photograph: T.S. Randhawa.

contains Maharao Lakhpatji's bed within a boldly decorated intimate interior (see Jaffer, figure 5). A legend now exists that the Maharao slept on his bed and mattress only for a year. Then, customarily, a new bed was ordered from his craftsmen, and the previous bed was auctioned off to one of the residents of his state. As many wealthy people in Kutch wanted to own the Maharao's beautiful bed, its sale enabled Lakhpatji to apply the capital raised annually to other entertainments of his own devising. However, the Maharao's last bed remains in the Hira Mahal collection, with its four legs made of pure gold.

The bedroom also displays many other opulent and luxurious objects, and decorative finishes. Among these fittings are a diamond-studded sword and shield which were presented by the Mughal Emperor Alamgir II in the eighteenth century (figure 9). The Hira Mahal is further decorated with twenty-seven full-size mirrors in the Rococo style, and other glass objects made specially for the room, such as lights and vase forms set into wall niches. The walls of the room are further decorated with semi-precious stones and gilding, appended to which is a gilded wooden ceiling. The overall impression felt by the visitor, when confronted by this decorative scheme, is one of both exotic sumptuousness and unusual intimacy.

The walls surrounding the exterior of the Hira Mahal are decorated with cloth panels of *aari* embroidery, now the most renowned embroidery technique of traditional Kutch origins (figures 4 and 10). The technique seen here originated with craftsmen from the Mochi caste of shoemakers. The Mochis who came to Bhuj were Rajputs who migrated from Sindh in the fourteenth century. Many memorial stones, *palia,* of their forbears still

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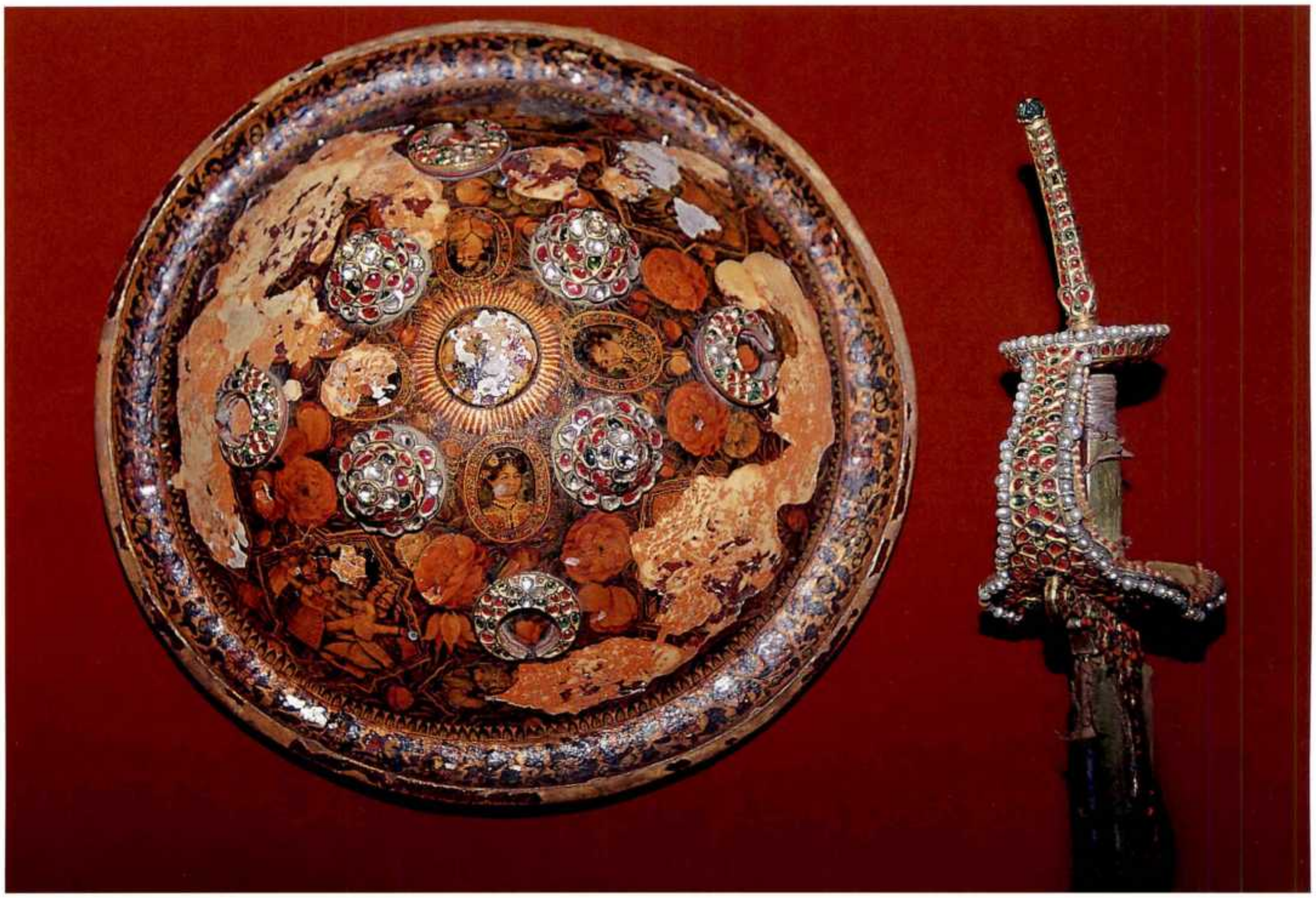
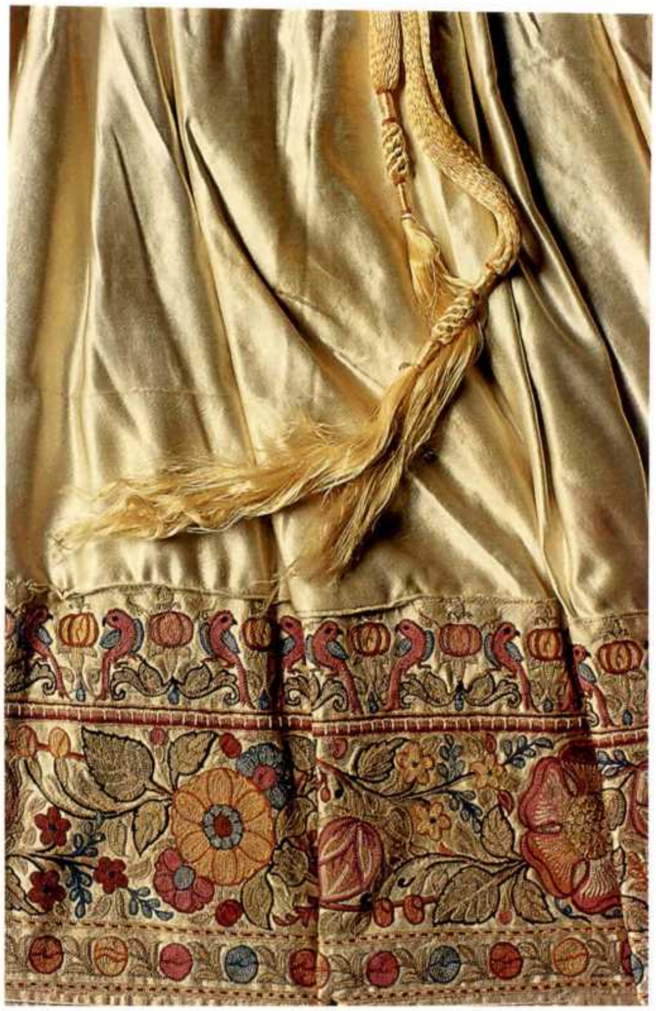


Gem-studded shield and sword, Hira Mahal. Alamgir II presented this to Maharao Lakhpatji in the eighteenth century. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.



10

A fine example of an *aari* embroidery border on a 16-yard skirt. Nineteenth century. Photograph: T.S. Randhawa.

remain at their ancestral home, Halvad, now a part of the Surendranagar district of Gujarat. The Mochi caste was expert in silver and gold engraving, *aari* embroidery, and *zardozi* work. They brought these craft traditions with them to Kutch, and their traditional techniques spread their influence throughout the land and abroad.

Aari embroidery is prepared by utilizing an *aar*-holed crewel needle, where the thread is introduced from below. This technique is familiarly known as *mochi bharat* or *aari*. Historic pieces of *aari bharat* employ silk thread embroidered onto a satin *gajji* ground. Although the technique is simple in principle, it requires considerable skill and long practice to perfect. The renowned art known today, flourished and spread its influence under the patronage of the royal families of Kutch and Saurashtra.

Fuvara Mahal

Adjacent to the Hira Mahal is a yet more remarkable feature of the Aina Mahal, the Fuvara Mahal (figure 11). In this chamber nearly the entire floor consists of a pleasure pool, complemented with spraying fountains, at the centre of which is a platform. Ingenious pumps and siphons were built to run the water features, and the net effect was to achieve the comfort of aircooling even during the heat of a Kutch summer day. The central throne platform, of stone, was thrust out into the watery environs of the room and approached on three sides by aisles. The corridors were ornamented by pillars which surround the pleasure pool and support a high ventilated roof, each capital of which was decorated with carvings based upon Chinese prototypes. The throne stood at the centre of the platform encircled by various sprayer devices and fanned from above by punkahs. Here, the Maharao could compose poems lit either by shielded subtle skylights or by elaborate pendant candelabra with shades of Venetian glass. In this way, either the heat of midday or that from the many candles, was alleviated by the evaporation of the surrounding water and the spraying fountains.

Around the gallery a rich collection of paintings on glass in Chinese style are displayed. The art of painting on glass, as exhibited here, first developed in China and then spread to India, Iran, France, England, and other eastern and western European countries. As merchants from Kutch engaged in a very active China trade during the eighteenth century, one of the fashions which became popular then was to decorate the home with paintings on glass. The merchants who travelled to China brought these marvellous paintings back with them, and some were presented to the Maharao. In this way, Lakhpatji's collection was created.

In Kutch, many painters also tried to make paintings on glass which emulated the Chinese

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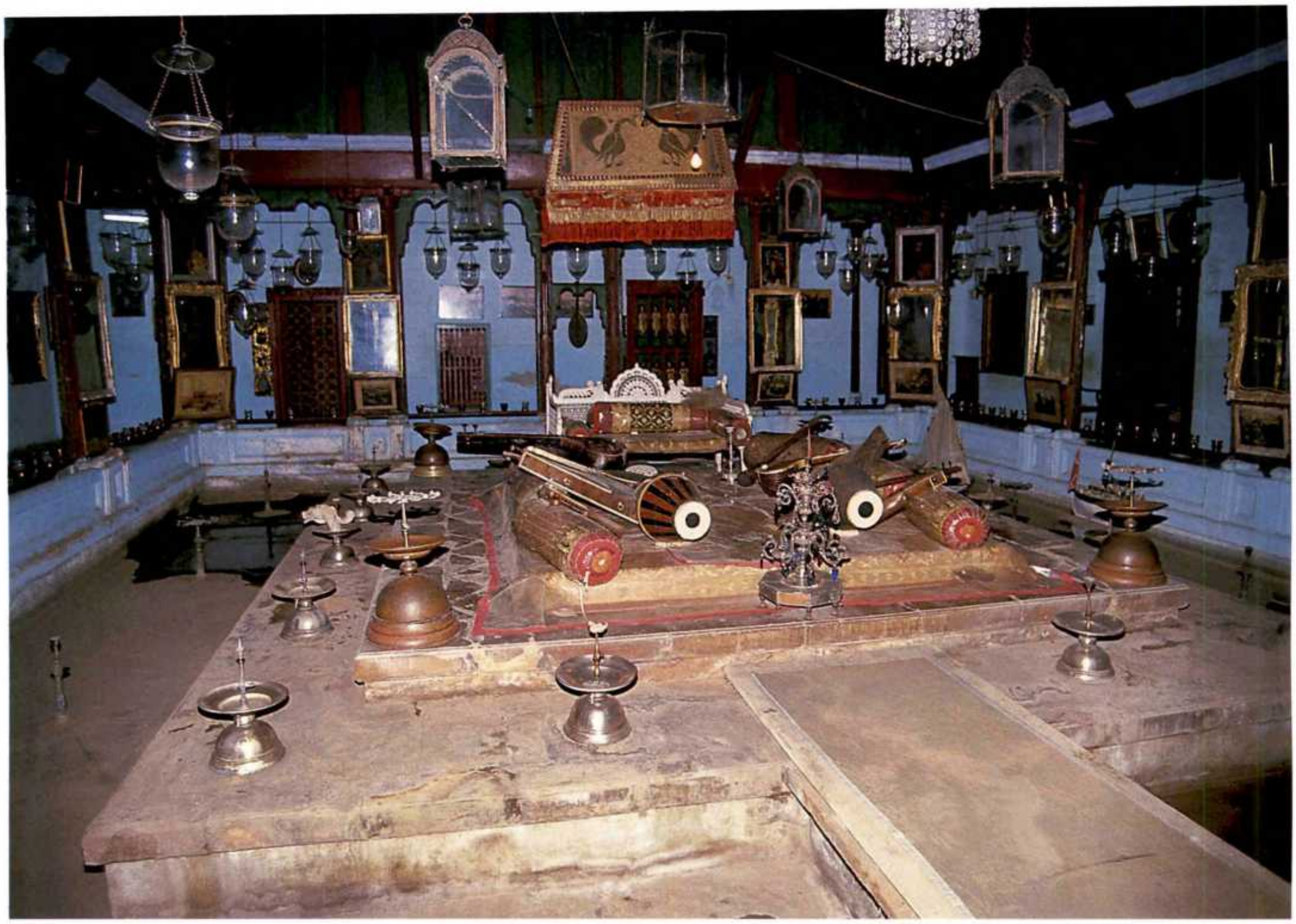


View of the Fuvara Mahal within the Aina Mahal. Maharao Lakhpatji utilized the platform, raised above the water and sprayers, as his music room, where he also studied and taught poetry. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

works they had seen imported into Kutch. These efforts resulted in the development of a school of Kutchi painting called the Kamangar style, within which many artists called *kamangars* worked.[14] Their chosen subjects were the Hindu gods and goddesses – Ganesha, Lakshmi, Vishnu, Krishna, with added subjects selected from topics derived from the European empire in India and that of dancing girls.

The Museum Collections – Second Floor

Ascending an exterior staircase to the second floor of the Aina Mahal, one enters the area of the palace where the darbars were held. In an ante-room here, the museum displays Mughal farmans issued between 1617 and 1658 by the emperors Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and his son, Dara Shukoh. Many of the farmans were addressed to Rao Tamachi, the ruler of Kutch from 1655–66.

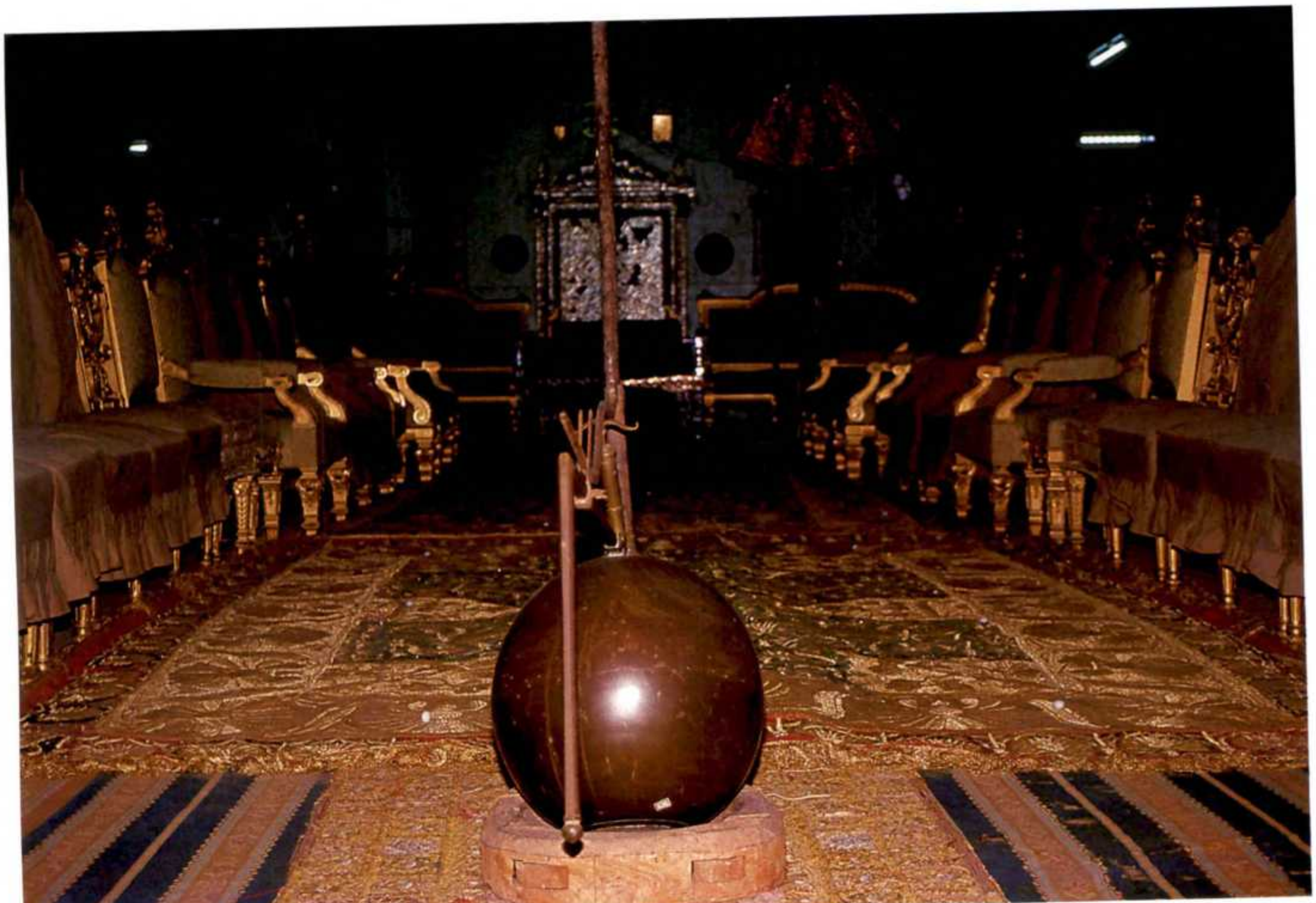
One farman, from Abdul Muzaffar Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir and dated April 20, 1617, showers praise on the rulers of Kutch for the assistance they provided the Mughals in their campaign to capture Gujarat. Another, from Shah Jahan, issued to Sultan Muzaffar Shah III of Ahmadabad, and dated April 8, 1657, addresses the Rao as the "cream of nobles" yet chastises him for the asylum provided to Akhiraj. Akhiraj had looted Dutch merchants when the Mughal commander Ali Quli Beg was sent to Bhuj to capture him. In this edict, both Rao Tamachi and Sultan Muzaffar Shah III were warned to surrender the fugitive, Akhiraj, or they too would be punished, to serve as an example to others. Yet another farman, dated March 6, 1657, asks the "cream of nobles" to pay due respects to Ali Kunwar Beg, the governor of Surat. However, the farman from Dara Shukoh is the most surprising in the Museum's collection. Dated December 6, 1657, it asks the Rao to come to Dara Shukoh's capital Akbarabad – now called Agra – and proceeds to order the Rao to make preparation for Dara Shukoh's future visit to Bhuj.[15] In another farman dated January 28, 1658, Dara Shukoh asks Rao Tamachi to capture Kutubuddin, a rebel who had attacked Kutch while Dara was resident at Bhuj, and Dara goes on to promise Mughal help in the capture of Kutubuddin, should there be a need.

The grand Darbar Hall itself contains a silver throne, flanked by a suite of nineteenth-century gilt-wood chairs and a marriage chamber created in 1884 for Maharao Khengarji III (r. 1876–1942). It also displays a perfume sprayer on the floor at its centre, accompanied by an exhibit of various weapons on the walls (figure 12).

Other pieces in the Museum collection reflect each ruler's interest in astrology. Each Rao had his own *jyotish* (astrologer) who drew artistic and beautiful *janma kundalis* (horoscopes) for his master. One such horoscope is that of Rao Pragmalji II made in 1839. It is 38.7 metres in length and believed to be the longest in the world (figure 13). Done in the Kamangar school style of painting, this particular horoscope is a well-preserved example of this technique, and one of the outstanding objects in the Aina Mahal Museum.

CONCLUSION

Lakhpatji's projects at the Aina Mahal reinforced his personal interest in developing further the crafts of Kutch, particularly after this first enterprise's resounding success. The Maharao evolved in his role of support, so that he came to



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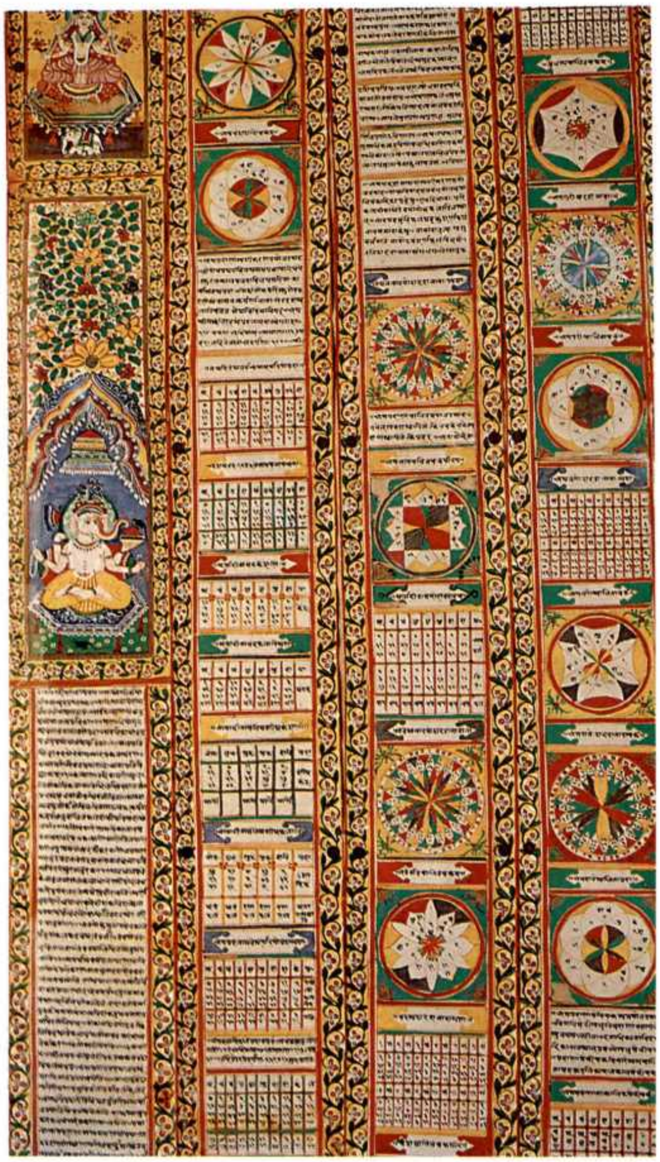
View of the Darbar Hall on the second floor of the Aina Mahal. The suite of nineteenth-century furniture came to the royal collections with Maharao Khengarji III's marriage. Photograph: Ashish Khokar.



13

Detail from the horoscope of Rao Pragmalji II. Kutch, 1839. 38.7 m long. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

underwrite Ramsingh, in a manner similar to the royal patronage well-documented in the development of the arts of Europe. Such support enabled Ramsingh to start a workshop for silverwork, a regional craft which made Kutchi artisans famous throughout the world. Enamelwork, cannon manufacturing, watchmaking, shipbuilding, and glassmaking were all developed to high levels of accomplishment in Kutch during this period. Ramsingh and Lakhpatji played a pivotal role in the evolution of these technical products' development, and the combination of Lakhpatji's visionary patronage and Ramsingh's blend of European and Indian skills left a unique heritage for successive Kutchi artisans and patrons to build upon. Lakhpatji's model came to be perceived as an ideal role for succeeding Maharaos to emulate, and his ground-breaking efforts, described here in detail, truly led to an artistic renaissance in the music, literature, and craft productions of Kutch, greatly to his credit.

NOTES

1. The documentation for this event cites the date (*Magser vad 5 Sevant 1605*). The date given is in the Vikram era. One has to subtract 57 from 1605 to get the date cited, a Christian calendar date.

2. Yuvraj is a term for heir apparent. During Lakhpatji's visit to Delhi, he presented to Alamgir II a few horses of the famous Kutchi breed, as a gift. Though Alamgir was not the figure who nominally ruled the Mughal empire, he was the reigning power at court, a parallel to Lakhpatji's own status at Kutch.

3. The historical documentation related to this incident further emphasizes Lakhpatji's love for music.

4. There is an added dimension to the adoption of these insignia, especially when one considers that Lakhpatji took them up when his father was still the nominal ruler, and there had been a small insurrection within his kingdom. The Rao chose to live in great state, and his affiliation with the grand Mughal empire, even if it was in decay, served his honour well. "There can be no doubt that these marks of Imperial recognition, of the kind conferred only upon reigning sovereigns, were valued by the Maharao mainly for reasons of purely local prestige", L.F. Rushbrook Williams, *The Black Hills. Kutch in History and Legend,* London, 1958, p. 137.

5. At some point Ramsingh was given the nickname of "The Navigator", due to his extensive sea travels.

6. The term jagirdar refers to the title assigned to the local chieftain, one who is the head of a few villages.

7. The serpent legend may allude to fact that Bhuj is within an earthquake zone. *Sud* refers to the bright half of the calendar month, *vad* refers to the dark half of the month.

8. The kori was the standard coin of Kutch and it was usually one-fifth of a rupee. Rao Bharmalji was granted the right to mint the kori, his state's own currency, by Jahangir in 1617. Jahangir offered this privilege to Bharmalji as he was the only prince to possess a navy.

This military tool could be utilized to threaten the Portuguese, a power which might possibly be useful to the Mughal empire at some future date. Jahangir further stipulated that for the privilege of minting the kori, Bharmalji also provide ships free of charge to Haj pilgrims.

9. Ramsingh, who collected many objects in Europe to furnish the royal apartments, imported Venetian mirror-glass and drinking glasses from Belgium during one of his trips to Europe. These objects also came to be used as models for his own production at the Kutch court.

10. A parallel in Europe exists. The same technique was successfully employed by Louis XIV, known as the Sun King, and the patron of Versailles. Rushbrook Williams, op. cit., p. 137.

11. Juma Ebrahim was a carpenter of the semi-migratory Vadha community of Kutch. Vadhas did lacquerwork, lathe-turning, carpentry, and painting in those days. They observe part-Hindu, part-Muslim customs. We are grateful to Dr Jyotindra Jain for this information.

12. Bracket clocks are typically smaller clocks, which originally stood on brackets screwed into the wall and were thus displayed as wall-mounted objects. Floor standing clocks are of two types; shorter versions are known as grandmother clocks, taller versions are called grandfather clocks.

13. The Hogarth prints consist of the series *A Rake's Progress*, Plate 1 – Taking Possession of his Father's Effects, Plate 2 – Attended by his Levee in London, Plate 3 – Revelling with Harlots, Plate 4 – Is Arrested Going to Court, Plate 7 – Confined in the Fleet Prison, Plate 8 – Mad in Bedlam (Bethlehem Hospital).

14. *Kamangar* means, literally, "bow-maker", and the artists discussed here seem originally to have developed their skills as a (generally Muslim) community, painting bows. Now, the word has been corrupted to *kamgar*. But, the original spelling elucidates the historic origins of the word while clearly identifying the group of artists first associated with the production of these paintings. We are grateful to Dr B.N. Goswamy for this information.

15. It should be noted that Dara Shukoh had come and stayed at a place which is still known as Darawadi in Bhuj.

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank the Aina Mahal Trust for permission to reproduce the photographs in this article.

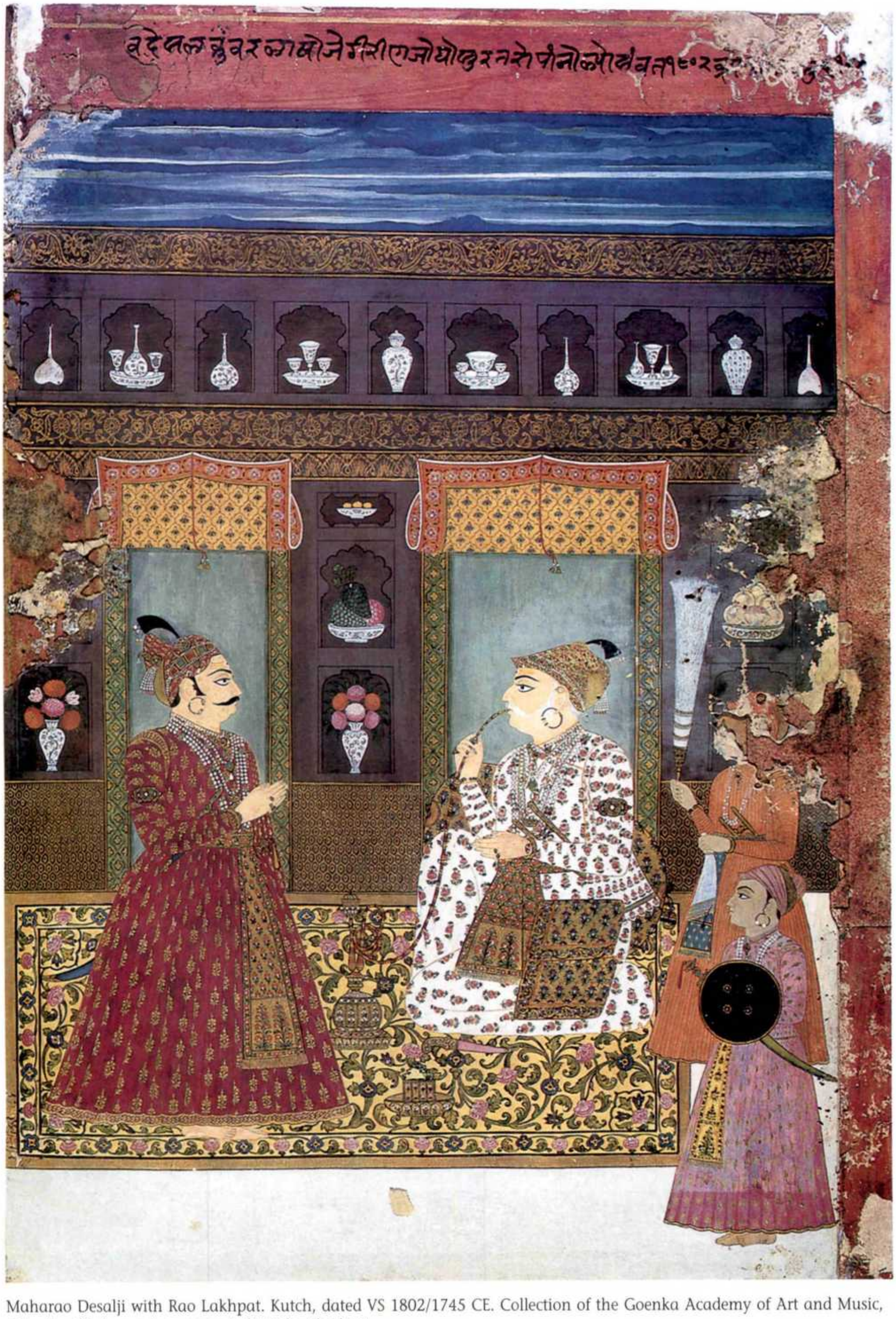
THE AINA MAHAL: AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF "EUROPEANERIE"

Amin Jaffer

The craze for things Oriental which existed in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is a recognized art historical and cultural phenomenon. Chinoiserie and *turquerie* represent an aesthetic flavoured by the taste for other cultures, or rather, Western perceptions of them. Architecture and interiors conceived in these styles evoked fantastic images of curious faraway lands inhabited by picturesque peoples, where rarities were abundant. These notions were reinforced, at a more popular level, by imports from the East for which there were no known equivalents in Europe, such as lacquer, porcelain, and chintz. What of the reverse scenario, the appropriation in the East of European taste and design? So far, scholars working on India in the era of the East India Companies have suggested that the Indian adoption of Western domestic articles was largely political.[1] At some level, Indian elites, operating within spheres of European influence, came to adopt trappings of Western lifestyle, in part, for the commercial advantages and social kudos attached to doing so. But even before it became advantageous to understand Western manners and tastes, there existed in India a very genuine interest in certain Western manufactures. It is likely that these sentiments were motivated by precisely the same type of curiosity which inspired chinoiserie in the West.

A unique example of the Indian taste for Europe, or "europeanerie", is found in the Aina Mahal, the palace of Maharao Lakho, known as Lakhpatji (r. 1741–60) built at Bhuj in the mid-eighteenth century. The palace was laid out along Indian lines, but its decoration was largely inspired by the West, and speaks volumes about the eighteenth-century Indian fascination with Western taste and technology. It cannot be overstressed that, unlike most Western-style palace architecture in India, the Aina Mahal was conceived and constructed well before British influence was established in the region; the first treaty between the British and the Raos of Kutch was not signed until 1809.

Most of what is presently known of the construction of the Aina Mahal derives from *The Black Hills* by L.F. Rushbrook Williams. His writing suggests that the palace was the result of an inspired working relationship between patron and artist. The former, Maharao Lakho understood the rhetoric of the visual display of power and used it to reinforce his position vis-a-vis the Jadeja bhayyad, the fraternity of nobles to which he belonged and which questioned his sovereign rights.[2] He distanced himself from his subordinates by establishing a more formal court structure where emphasis was placed on his supreme position through ceremony (figure 1).[3] Lakhpatji reinforced his position by ingratiating himself with the Mughal court, which in 1757 granted him the royal title of Mirza Maharao and allowed him to use the insignia of the Mahi Maratib, the premier decoration bestowed by the Mughal emperors.[4] As we shall see, Lakhpatji's curiosity about things European was by no means an unusual attitude among princes of his

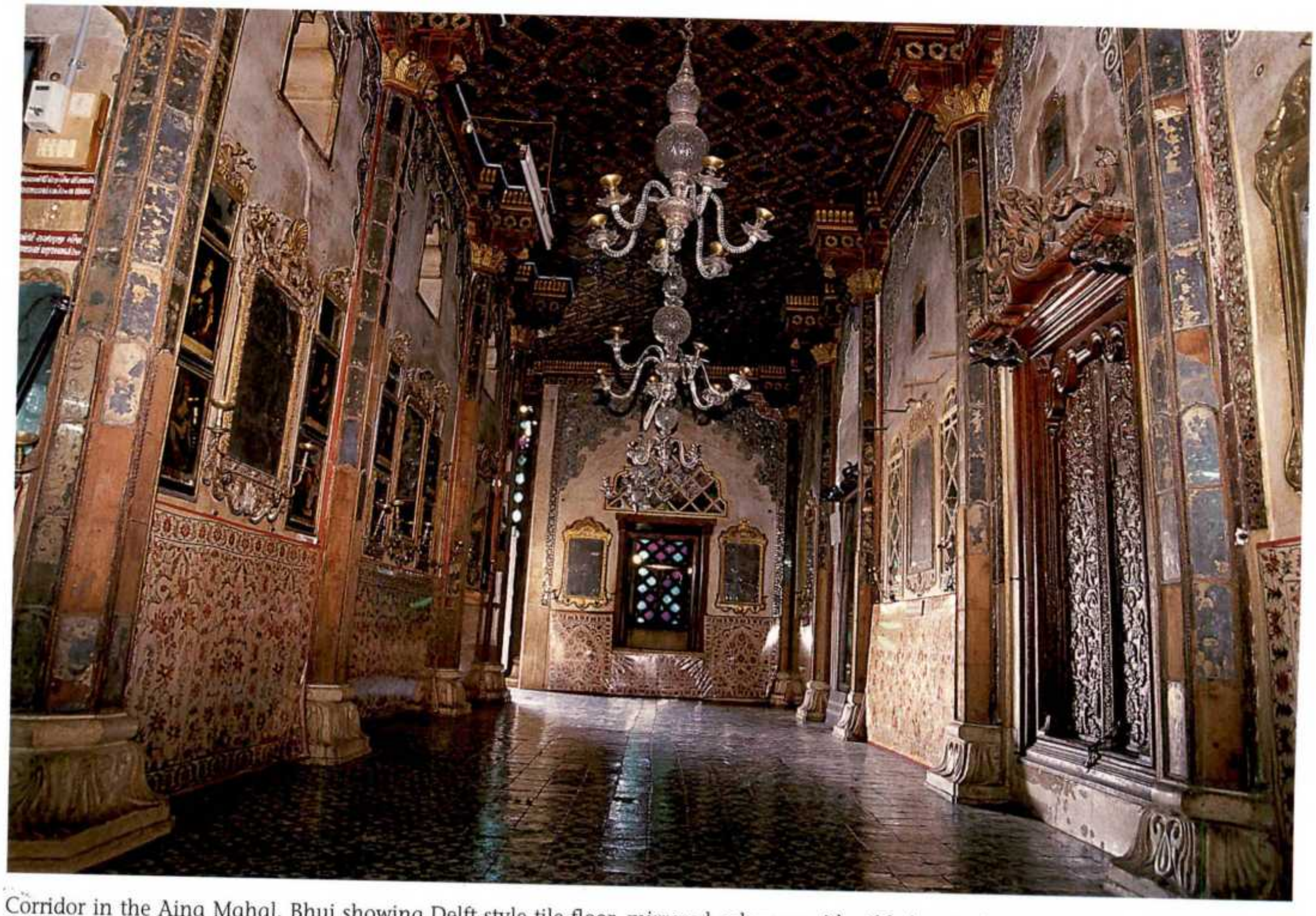


1

Maharao Desalji with Rao Lakhpat. Kutch, dated VS 1802/1745 CE. Collection of the Goenka Academy of Art and Music, Calcutta. Photograph courtesy Lalit Kala Akademi.
The opulence of furnishing and decoration seen in this painting became even more pronounced in the Aina Mahal.

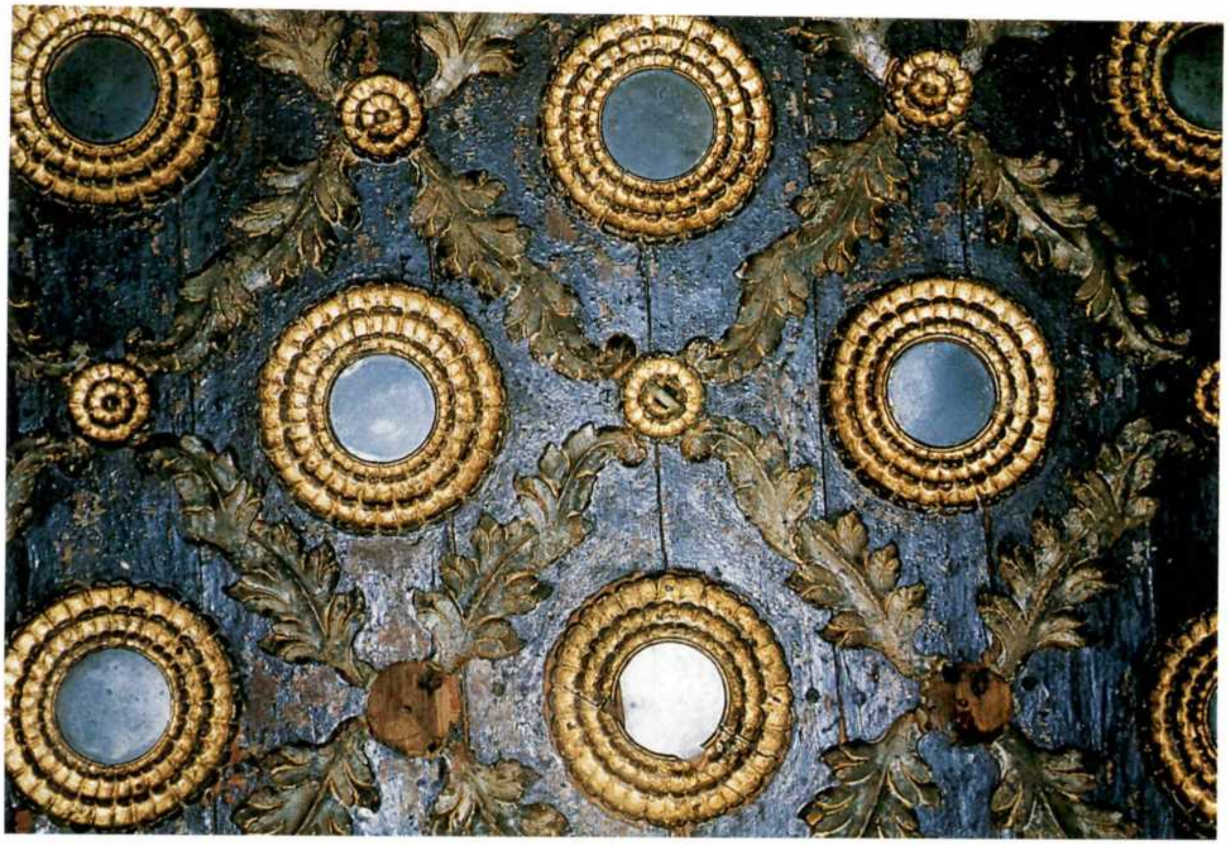
generation. However, he differed from them in his ready access to a craftsman with whom he could communicate and yet who was largely trained within a Western idiom. The craftsman Ramsingh Malam was, we are told, carried on board a vessel to the Netherlands at the age of twelve and returned to his native Saurashtra eighteen years later with expertise in architecture, tile and enamelwork, glassblowing, and clockmaking as well as an understanding of gun casting and skills in the foundry.[5]

Under Lakhpatji's patronage, Ramsingh was able to exercise his skills to great effect. Workshops were set up in which he was able to put into practice his knowledge of Western technology. Ramsingh and his Kutchi apprentices travelled back to Europe on two occasions to perfect their skills, and among the places they are known to have visited are Venice and Vienna. But from what we know of Lakhpatji's subsequent building activities, it would seem likely that part of the purpose of Ramsingh's voyage must have been to improve his understanding of European courtly interiors and to make purchases of Western luxury goods for his patron. Although aspects of the interior of the Aina Mahal are inspired by European fashions of the first half of the eighteenth century, exemplified by the central gallery of mirrors, there is no obvious prototype for its decoration. Nor has Ramsingh surfaced yet in European diaries and letters of the period, thus depriving us of detailed information about his travels. Although the precise design sources which inspired the Aina Mahal are unclear, what is evident is that the palace was conceived to represent the marvels of the West and incorporated within it those Western technologies which were most highly prized by Indian elites of the day.



2

Corridor in the Aina Mahal, Bhuj showing Delft-style tile floor, mirrored columns with gilded capitals and bases, *aari* embroidery dado panels, European mirrors used in symmetrical arrangements with prints, and Venetian-style blown-glass chandeliers. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.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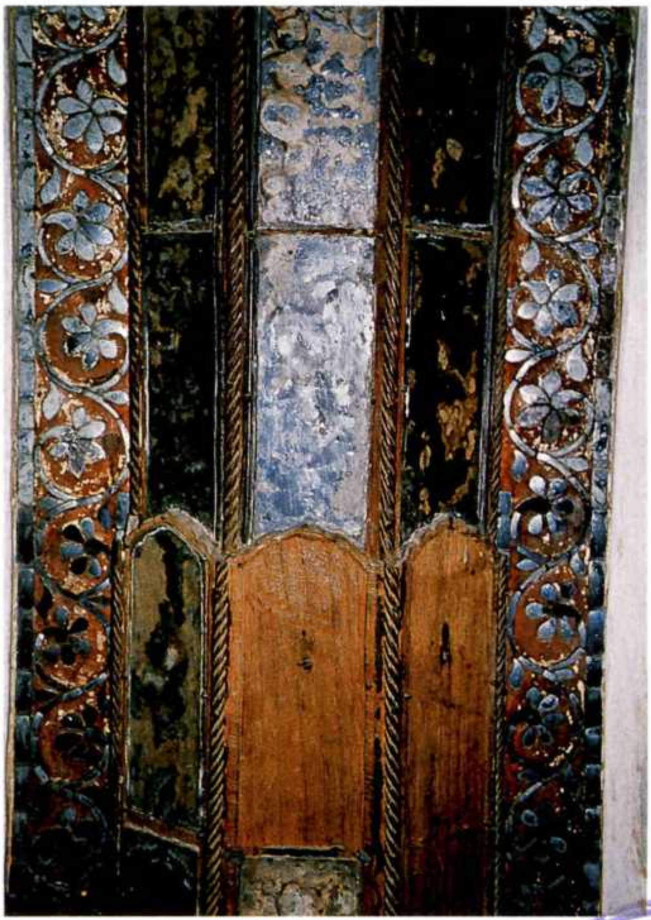
Detail of carved and gilt woodwork and inset mirror decoration on the ceiling of the corridor shown in figure 2. Photograph: Amin Jaffer.

THE HIRA MAHAL

The focus of this article is the first floor of the Aina Mahal, particularly the royal bedchamber (Hira Mahal), the hall which precedes it, and the corridors which surround it (figure 2). The floor plan of the Aina Mahal owes nothing to Europe for its inspiration. Western influence is articulated exclusively in the elevation of the walls. This includes a cornice, columns with florid capitals and bases, doors with exuberantly carved pediments, and a dado which is defined by pieces of traditional Kutchi *aari* embroidery (figures 2 and 6). From the ceiling hang chandeliers, and the floor is of blue and white tiles made in Bhuj after Dutch or English examples.

The central decorative device in the Aina Mahal, and that which gives it its name is the mirror. In the ceiling, on the doors which guard the Hira Mahal, and on a side of one of the corridors surrounding it, plates of mirror are used as background against which are contrasted patterns in carved and gilt woodwork (figure 3).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Detail of mirror plaques on column, Aina Mahal. Photograph: Amin Jaffer.

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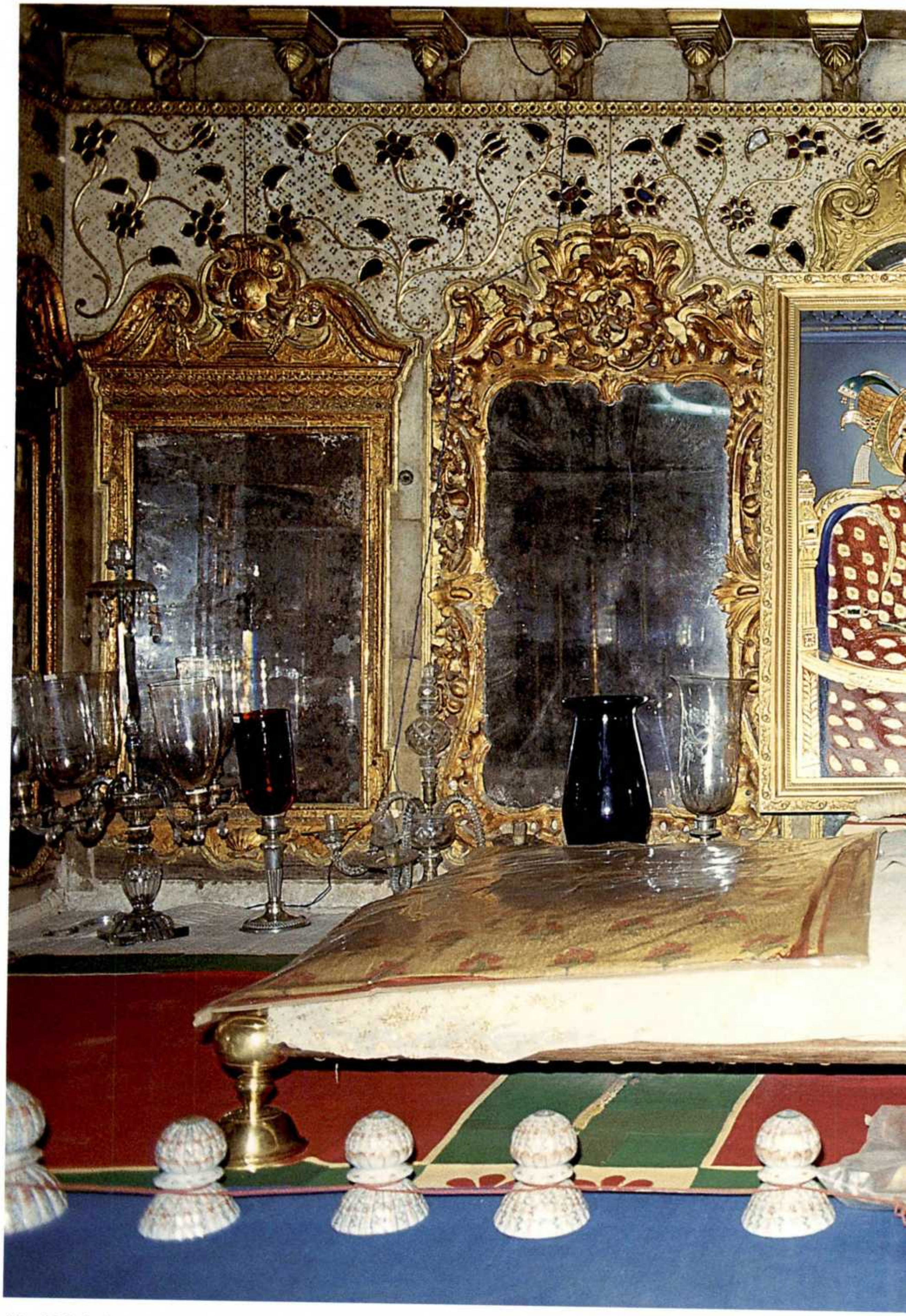
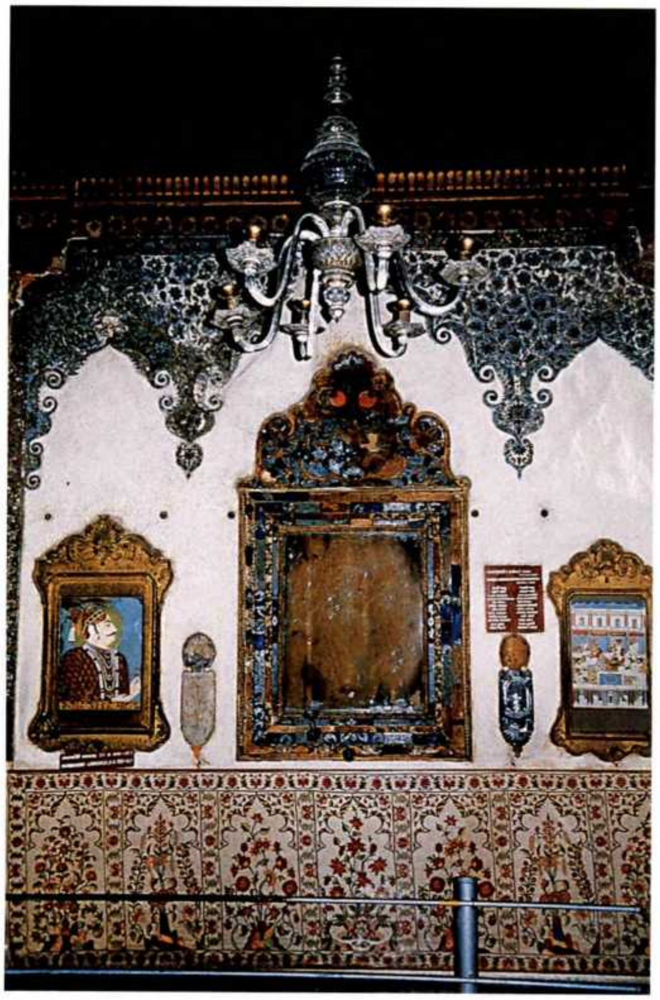


Hira Mahal, the bedchamber of Lakhpatji, Aina Mahal. Photograph: T.S. Randhawa.

Plaques of mirror articulate the faceted columns which punctuate the white marble walls of the corridors (figure 4). Throughout this area and in Lakhpatji's bedroom, there are mirrors within gilt frames embedded in the walls. The origins of the mirrors are not always certain and appear to be a mixture of European and Indian, the latter made locally in Ramsingh's glass factory at Mandvi.[6] The frames are universally inspired by exuberant Baroque or Rococo models current in Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century, and while some examples appear to be European, others are less convincingly so and may have been made in Kutch, drawing on imported examples. The most lavish use of mirrors in the palace occurs in Lakhpatji's bedroom (figure 5). Here, there are a total of twenty-seven mirrors in gilt frames inset at ground level, into marble walls, which are inlaid with designs of flowers in gold and semi-precious stones. The positioning of the mirrors in the Hira Mahal suggests that Lakhpatji's interest was in the reflective attributes and lustre of the objects themselves, rather than in the way they should have been used in a Western context (figure 6). He sat at ground level, and this determined the installation of the decoration around him.



6

Wall in the Aina Mahal, first floor, showing dado with *aari*, and European-style mirrors. The hall is lit by elaborate candelabra with Venetian glass shades. Photograph: Amin Jaffer.

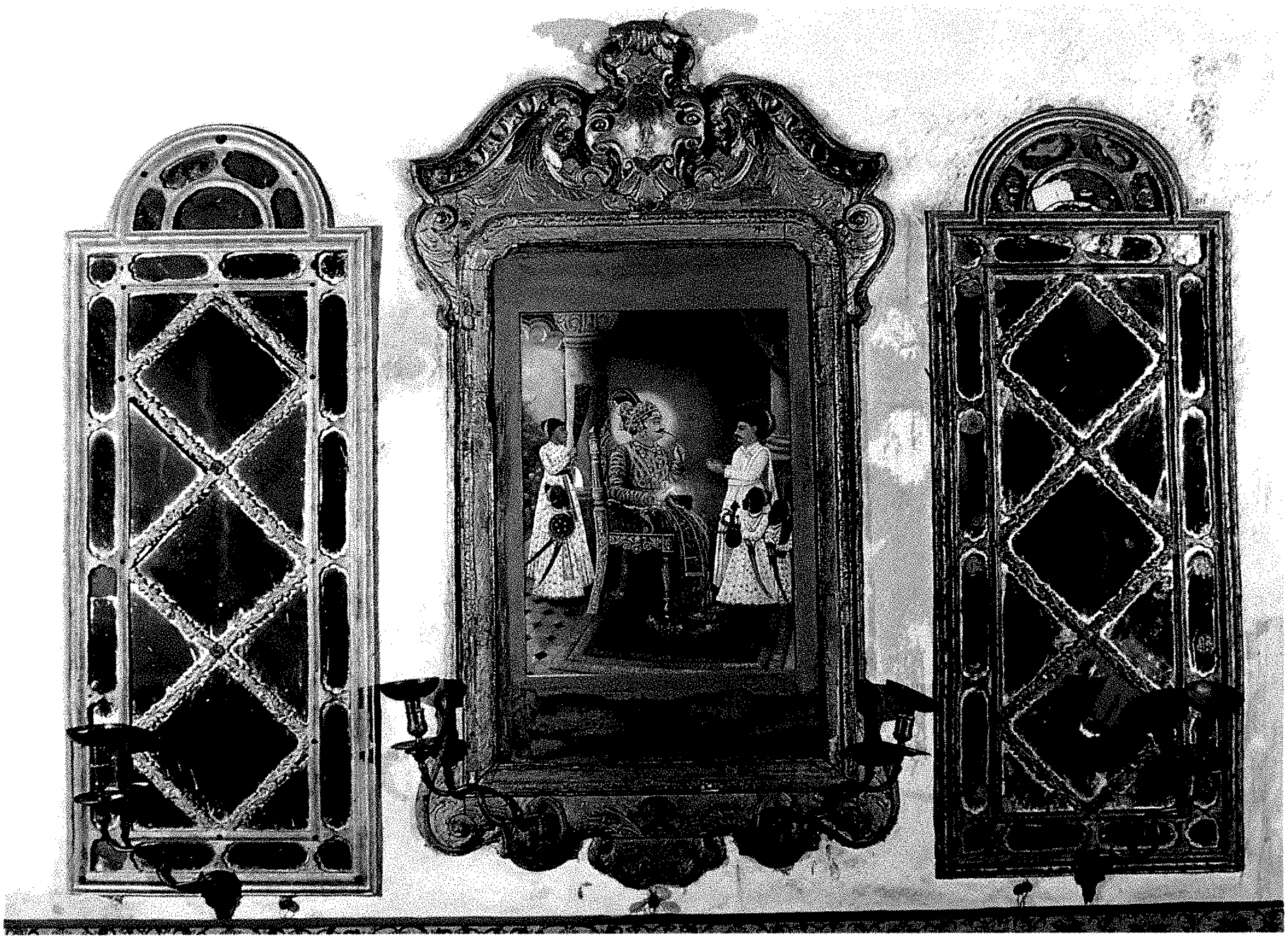
WESTERN NOVELTIES IN THE INDIAN PRINCELY INTERIOR

The use of mirrors in the palace leaves us in no doubt as to their intended and perceived significance to mid-eighteenth-century Kutchi court society. European mirrors had, in fact, been prized by Indian elites since they first surfaced at the Mughal court, very probably because their size and quality allowed them to be used for decorative rather than simply functional purposes. As early as 1608, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir was known to possess Venetian mirrors and we know that they were eagerly collected by his courtiers.[7] Such was the demand for mirrors among Indian elites that in 1614 the East India Company thought it prudent to instruct Robert Young in the "skill of foylinge looking-glasses" and sent him to Surat to train their factors there in this art.[8] Contemporary documents indicate that mirrors constituted standard presents offered by Europeans to Indian princes in their efforts to secure trading privileges.[9] Their availability increased with time and by the early nineteenth century, large mirrors became standard decorative devices in Indian palace interiors. For instance, on visiting the Raja of Trichinopoly (Tiruchirapalli) in 1773, George Paterson noted that the darbar hall was fitted with "very large Mirrors ... but they have been damaged and broken in some places, and that the Size of the Plate might be preserved, the Artist has covered all the Cracks with Curious gilded Ornaments, like the gold flowers on a Gingar bread Cake."[10] Accounts such as these are typical. Contemporary commentators noted in particular that Asaf-ud-daula, Nawab of Oudh (r. 1775–97), had assembled an especially fine collection of mirrors, some of "which were the largest that had ever been made in Europe, of course in the world; they were ordered expressly for him, and were made up in London, where they cost £8,000. They were 12 feet broad and 6 feet long."[11] In some instances mirrors were the only Western decorative elements used, such as at the Roshen Bagh Palace in Kassimbazar, Bengal, which the Marquess of Hastings noted in the early nineteenth century was "distinguished by nothing of furniture, except that at each end of the two principal rooms there were handsome mirrors".[12]

Other visually impressive features employed in the decoration of the Aina Mahal are the chandeliers, presumably brought back from Europe by Ramsingh himself. These, along with wall sconces and candlesticks, were highly prized by Indians both for the lustrous impression they created and for the sophisticated manner in which they used glass, the likeness of which had hitherto not been seen in the subcontinent. Fixed glass lighting fixtures from Europe replaced indigenous candlesticks and oil lamps, which in former times were moved about, placed in wall niches, or on the floor, where they sometimes sat under glass shades of European manufacture. With the arrival in India of quantities of glass chandeliers in the second half of the eighteenth century, princely residences increasingly came to be lit in a Western manner and India came to constitute a significant market for such European manufactures.[13] European visitors frequently commented on the grand, sometimes excessively opulent, lighting to be found in Indian interiors. Paterson's description of the palace at Trichinopoly informs us that it was lit by "exceedingly rich Curious Chandeliers".[14] Mrs Sherwood (1775–1851) reveals that the Nawab of Murshidabad's palace was "lighted by English chandeliers" and Emily Eden (1797–1869) writes of a darbar hall at Fatehpur Sikri which was "fitted up in the oddest way with French chandeliers of green and purple and yellow glass, as thick as they could be hung".[15]

The Aina Mahal boasts a curious assemblage of pictures and prints ranging from Hogarth's celebrated series *A Rake's Progress*, to portraits of European figures such as Catherine the Great, Chinese and Indian reverse glass painting, and Kutchi royal portraits (figure 7). These are framed and embedded in the wall in the manner of the mirrors with which they are interspersed.[16] As with mirrors and lustres, Western pictures of the type found in the Aina Mahal were also sought after by Indian elites of the day. This tradition was established by the Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, who all demonstrated a strong appreciation of European art. Writing to London in the early seventeenth century, English diplomat Thomas Best requisitioned a "good store of pictures... for these are presents fitt for the great Magoll..." and Thomas Roe, after considerable failure in finding suitable presents for Jahangir finally outlined his demands to the Company in London: "pictures of all sortes, if good, in constant request".[17] The Mughal response to European painting is a study in itself. However, here it must be stated, at least, that European pictures were studied, copied, and incorporated into interiors, where they were sometimes even hung on the wall. This departure from the traditional custom of keeping pictures in albums was observed by Europeans at the Mughal court. At Nauroz celebrations in 1616, Sir Thomas Roe saw Jahangir's darbar decorated with "pictures of the King of England, the Queene, my lady Elizabeth, the Countesse of Sommersett and Salisbury", which had been given by his predecessor, William Edwards.[18] The Jesuit missionary Fernam Guerreiro also recorded that Jahangir "had the walls and ceilings of various halls painted with pictures of the mysteries of Christ Our Lord and scenes from the Acts of the Apostles...".[19] The taste for European pictures can also be observed and documented at some provincial courts, where by the second half of the eighteenth century they had become a regular decorative feature. Visiting "Naziss Cawn" of Tanjore in 1774, George Paterson found that the private apartments of his palace "are full of small pictures.... Some of the pictures are Chinese, many of them English - and amongst other English prints there are several of the King and Queen and some English Generals and Admirals."[20] Paterson recorded that the Raja of Trichinopoly's palace, by contrast, was hung with portraits of the French royal family.[21]

At the time of the building of the Aina Mahal, pictures could be acquired in a number of different ways. We know that East India Company officials brought them out to India as part of their trading "indulgence" and it is very likely that they would have been available at Mandvi, an international port into which European vessels called with regularity.[22] William Jennings, for instance, carried with him to India in 1708 "2 Small Cases of Pictures", and Captain Richard Micklefied took out "2 Case qt. 20 Pictures", certainly intended for resale on arrival.[23] Engravings of monarchs or military leaders were commonly sent out from Europe both officially by the Company, and as private trade, and images of this sort were frequently presented to local rulers.[24] Indian princes were also in the habit of commissioning locally-based Europeans to procure pictures, furniture, and other Western domestic articles for them, for which they were paid handsome fees. For instance, in 1767 Mohammed Ali Wallajah, the Nawab of Arcot (1749–95)



7

Portion of wall, above dado, to the left of the ornamental door in figure 2. The European mirror frame, with a painting of Maharao Lakhpatji and his retainer Gaidhar Devshi who worked in the Aina Mahal as a carpenter, is flanked by mirror and frame compositions of Ramsingh's design and manufacture. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

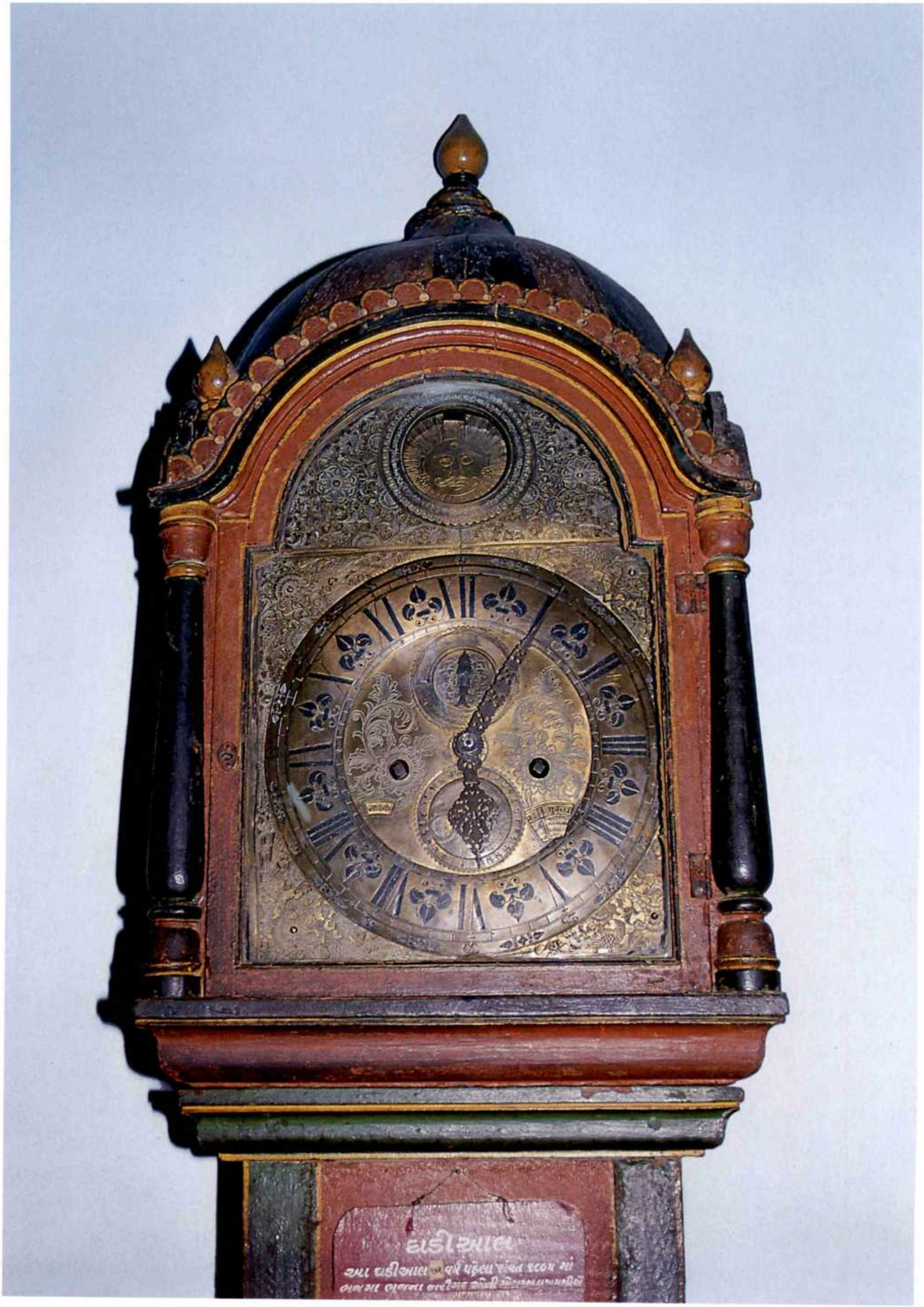
ordered through Nicholas Morse, a former Governor of Madras, "2 settees with 24 'Chairs to suit them handsome', 2 mahogany card tables, 2 large pier glasses, looking-glasses, lamps, 12 engravings and '6 Pieces of Paintings to place in Pannels of a large Room'."[25] Bob Pott, a friend of the late-eighteenth-century diarist William Hickey, secured the lucrative post of Resident at the court of the Nawab of Bengal, and had the "advantage of purchasing and paying for every European article the Nabob wished to have".[26] Schemes for ordering English luxuries on behalf of Indian princes were not always successful. Having commissioned a quantity of plate from Grey's of Bond Street on his behalf, Pott found that the Nawab had decided against the purchase, and Sir Paul Jodrell, surgeon to the Nawab of Arcot, ordered carriages for his courtiers for which it was exceedingly difficult to extract payment.[27] Of course, in the case of Lakhpatji, European articles were purchased directly by Ramsingh during his journeys to the West, and this is very possibly the way that the large group of mid-eighteenth-century engravings came into the Aina Mahal collections.[28]

CLOCKS AND LATER COLLECTIONS

The last significant Western element to be dealt with here are mechanical clocks, of which there are a number of examples in the Aina Mahal (figure 8). Visiting the Aina Mahal in 182 , Colonel Tod noted the "Dutch and English chiming-clocks, which were all set a-going at once, forming a true Dutch chorus".[29] Mrs Postans, writing in the same period, also referred to the "clocks ... attributed to the redoubtable Ram Sing, who is said to have brought them with him from Holland".[30] Chiming clocks from Europe were a source of great fascination in the East, and we know that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were assiduously collected at courts as distant from one another as Constantinople, Delhi, and Peking. The East India Company had experimented with exporting them to India in the early seventeenth century, but by 1613 had decided to stop since they were prone to damage on the voyage out, and when spoiled they could only be fixed by clockmakers. Finally, it was uncertain whether clocks were of any use to Indians since it was not clear how Indians "doe accompt their daies".[31] However, it is known that presents of clocks were made to Jahangir both by Sir Robert Shirley and Sir Thomas Roe.[32] Clocks were also appropriated into the currency of presents exchanged among Asiatic rulers; in 1616 Shah Abbas presented five clocks of European manufacture to Jahangir.[33] Clocks appear frequently in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records among presents given to Indian nobility. For instance, in 1650, English factors at Balasore demanded a store of clocks to be given as presents to local rulers, and in 1715 the English presented the Mughal emperor with a table clock.[34] A request for clocks from the King of Pegu to the Governor of Madras in 1711 provides some idea of the fascination that clocks held among Asiatic rulers:

> I desire that it may be thus, viz., that it strikes the hours distinctly, beginning in the morning by one and so on till twelve; having two images to strike the hours on the bell or clock. This and another clock of Malta, with a woman's image pouring oil in a vessel which runs all the hour; and when it is out, the said image fills it again and so every hour.[35]

Yet, no matter how amusing these articles were, the question remains: how useful were clocks to Indians? In his study of Indian responses to European technology and culture, Qaisar opines that while clocks were admired as curiosities, particularly for the sounds they made, ultimately they kept time according to the European manner. Thus, they were of little practical value to a people who divided the day into sixty units of roughly twenty-four minutes.[36]



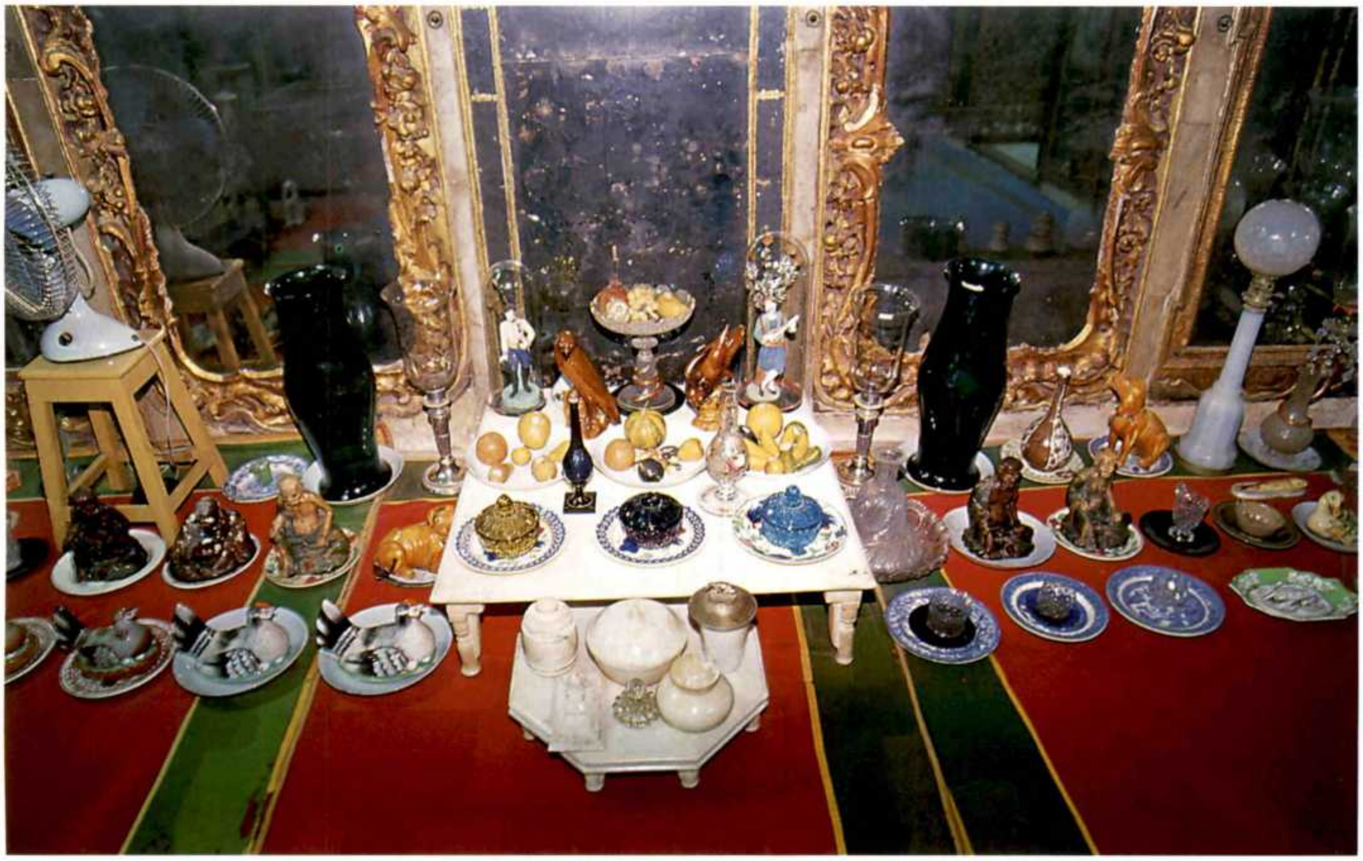
8

Detail of a longcase clock in the Aina Mahal made by Morarji Lakhamshi Soni of Bhuj in 1839. It is based on early eighteenth-century European design. Notice the Mahi Maratib-style silent/chime regulation hand, and the Kutchi inscriptions for month and year below the winding posts. Wooden case, brass clockwork; 3m. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

PRINCELY COLLECTING

The Aina Mahal contains, besides its original Western furnishings, a large and diverse group of European manufactures, most particularly glassware and ceramics (figure 9). These are most likely to have been acquired in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and correspond to the pattern of hoarding Western articles, regardless of value or quality, which occurred among Indian elites in the early period of British hegemony. In *Curry and Rice*, a caricature on life in a British settlement during the Raj, the author satirized the palace of "Our Nuwab" writing that it included "articles that an unaccomplished Oriental would find great use for: such as pianos by the dozen...harps, babies' cots, four-post bedsteads, ladies' wardrobes, marble-topped round tables ... carriages *ad infinitum* ... and billiard tables".[37] Honoria Lawrence, writing in the 1840s, similarly observed the interior of a princely establishment crammed with European toys, books, clocks, and chandeliers, as well as "Beautiful alabaster chimney ornaments, mixed with coarse, grotesque clay idols, maps, globes, telescopes, couches, chairs, and beds, all crowded together with as little order as I have observed in the catalogue".[38] The disparity in the quality of objects in such interiors was remarked on repeatedly, as was the inappropriate way in which things were used or displayed.[39] This was precisely how the Aina Mahal was seen by Mrs Postans, who visited in the 1830s and requested her reader to:

> ...imagine himself introduced, by some wholesale glass-dealer, to his sample room, where, amongst jelly glasses, and old vases, are introduced some half dozen antique musical clocks, all playing at once, and the whole display brilliantly illuminated by large wax candles, at noon-day! The mental picture may then afford him of some idea of this motley and incongruous melange of ornament, which contributes to the regal magnificence of this most dazzling of state-apartments.[40]



9

Miscellaneous "europeanerie", Aina Mahal. Photograph: Ramesh Soni.

Colonel Tod likewise commented that the "shelves about the centre of the wall were covered with all sorts of glass-ware, like a pawnbroker's shop, the resemblance being not a little increased by a variety of glass figures, which decorated the walls themselves".[41]

In this assessment of Western domestic articles in Indian palaces, an attempt has been made to amply demonstrate that the types of objects found in the Aina Mahal were by no means rare. Mirrors, lustres, pictures, and clocks, although expensive and difficult to procure, were known to Indians of the time, and ownership of these signified high rank. In Bayly's words, as in the West, so was it in India that "the profusion of novelties in a court was considered another mark of great kingship".[42] What is distinctive about the Aina Mahal is the degree to which it borrows from European interior decoration. Perhaps the earliest example of an Indian craftsman working for an Indian prince in a Western idiom, the palace reflects, above all, a fascination with the West and its technologies. However, it is important to keep in mind the spirit in which it was commissioned. The Aina Mahal was not motivated by the forces of politics and Westernization which inspired grandiose Western-style palace architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nor was it conceived by a Western architect or engineer, or designed to include rooms to accommodate the Western manner of living. Rather, it was the result of a curiosity about another culture and its aesthetic, similar to that which existed at the same time in countries such as France and England. Just as chinoiserie in Europe was a creation of the imagination, so was Lakhpatji's "europeanerie" an Indian fantasy of the West.

NOTES

1. G.H.R. Tillotson, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*, New Haven and London, 1989, p. 40.

2. B.N. Goswamy and A.L. Dallapiccola, *A Place Apart: Painting in Kutch, 1720–1820*, Delhi, 1983, pp. 9, 11.

3. Ibid., p. 11.

4. L.F. Rushbrook Williams, *The Black Hills. Kutch in History and Legend*, London, 1958, p. 137.

5. Ibid., p. 138.

6. Ibid.

7. W. Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619*, London, 1921, p. 164.

8. Quoted in A.J. Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture (A.D. 1498–1707)*, Delhi, 1982, p. 73.

9. Ibid.

10. Oriental and India Office Collections (OIOC), British Library, *Mss.Eur.E.379/8*, p. 208.

11. M. Archer, *India and British Portraiture 1770–1825*, London, 1979, p. 144. Quote from a letter by Lewis Ferdinand Smith.

12. The Marchioness of Bute, ed., *The Private Journals of the Marquess of Hastings*, London, 1858, p. 85.

13. "A letter from George Cornish, Aide-de-Camp to Sir John Shore, Governor-General, during an Official Tour in 1797", *Bengal Past & Present*, vol. XVI, 1918, p. 116. An indication of the Indian vogue for Western lighting fixtures is evident in the Birmingham firm Osler and Co's establishing a branch in Calcutta in 1840.

14. OIOC, *Mss.Eur.E.379/8*, p. 208.

15. For Murshidabad see Sophia Kelly, ed., *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood*, London, n.d., p. 295. For Fatehpur Sikri see E. Eden, *Up the Country*, London, 1983, p. 355.

16. Goswamy and Dallapiccola, op. cit., p. 49.

17. For Thomas Best see W. Foster, ed., *The Voyage of Thomas Best*, London, 1934, pp. 244-45. For Thomas Roe see W. Foster, ed., *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, London, vol. I, 1967, p. 488.

18. Foster, *Thomas Roe*, op. cit., p. 142.

19. E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, London, 1932, pp. 238-40.

20. OIOC, *Mss.Eur.E.379/9*, pp. 39-40. *The Journal of Mrs. Fenton 1826–1830*, London, 1901, p. 39. John Lawrence and Audrey Woodiwiss, eds., *The Journals of Honoria Lawrence*, London, 1980, p. 82.

21. OIOC, *Mss.Eur.E.379/9*, p. 207.

22. Goswamy and Dallapiccola, op. cit., p. 37.

23. For Jennings see *Despatches from England 1696–1699*, Madras, 1929, p. 24. For Micklefied see *Despatches from England 1717–1721*, Madras, 1927, p. 73.

24. *Despatches from England 1681–1686*, Madras, 1961, p. 151.

25. OIOC, *Add.Mss.34.686*, f. 14.

26. Hickey noted that this posting was among the most profitable in the Company's service. *Memoirs of William Hickey, 1749–1809*, London, 1948, vol. III, p. 236.

27. OIOC, Photo 136, p. 64.

28. Goswamy and Dallapiccola, op. cit., pp. 33-37.

29. Quoted in ibid., p. 65, footnote 58.

30. Mrs Postans, *Cutch; or Random Sketches, Taken during a Residence in one of the Northern Provinces of Western India; Interspersed with Legends and Traditions*, London, 1839, pp. 39-40.

31. Quoted in Qaisar, op. cit., p. 66.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. For Balasore see ibid., p. 67. For presentation of the table clock see J.T. Wheeler, *Madras in the Olden Time*, Madras, 1882, p. 353.

35. Quoted in Wheeler, op. cit., pp. 300-01. See also Foster, *Thomas Roe*, op. cit., p. 115n. OIOC, *Mss.Eur.D.295*, book IV, 1758–61, f. 61.

36. Qaisar, op. cit., p. 68.

37. G.F. Atkinson, *Curry and Rice*, reprint Delhi, 1982, p. 125.

38. Lawrence and Woodiwiss, op. cit., p. 82.

39. F. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, vol. II, London, 1850, p. 17.

40. Postans, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

41. Tod, quoted in Goswamy and Dallapiccola, op. cit., pp. 65-66, footnote 58.

42. C.A. Bayly, "The origins of swadeshi (home industry): cloth and Indian society, 1700–1930", *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, Cambridge, 1986, p. 305.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the following people for their help in the preparation of this article: Karina Corrigan, Edgar Harden, Pramod Jethi, David Laws, Duncan McLaren, Jeffry Pond, and Deborah Swallow.

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THE PRAG MAHAL AND HENRY ST CLAIR WILKINS' ARCHITECTURE

Christopher W. London

Kutch is a state with a distinct architectural tradition, a result of its unique position of isolation from the mainland of India. It is both linked to the Indian mainstream, yet separated and prosperous through its contacts with the outside world.

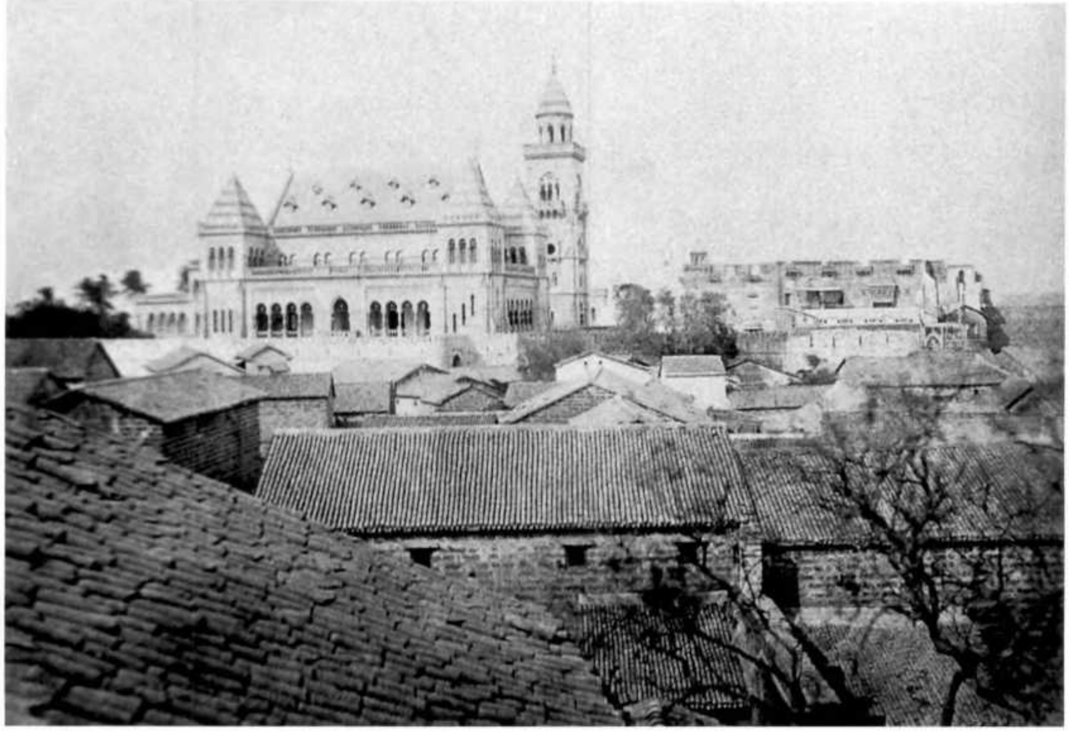
> Thus surrounded by sea on one side and by the Ranns on the other Kutch has been throughout much of its history a place apart; a sanctuary for the possession of which princely adventurers from many parts of India contended fiercely; a forcing-house for a clan and territorial loyalties whose intensity rivals those of the Scottish Highlands. Even when the connection between Kutch and the British raj in India was three-quarters of a century old, the Bombay Government recognised officially that among all its extensive responsibilities, Kutch had most of the elements of a distinct nationality, because of its isolated position, the special character of its people, and their strong feeling of loyalty to their ruler.[1]

The studies in this volume about the Aina Mahal have already documented some of the unusual taste for European design to be found at Bhuj. However, the nineteenth century witnessed a further flowering of this rich courtly tradition, and with the Prag Mahal a new level of luxury and courtly splendour was achieved.

Maharao Pragmal II, GCSI (1838–76) for whom the palace is named, was installed on the throne in July 1860.[2] His reign benefited greatly from the peace attained through the resolution and end of the Bhayyad struggle.[3] This was brought about by a British treaty, bolstered further by the annexation of Sindh and through the conclusion of the Afghan Wars in 1838. The tranquillity enabled Rao Pragmalji and the administrators in his government to devote time and money to building activity and governing at home, which heretofore had been devoted to other concerns. Furthermore, the imperial British Navy assured trading security for the East Africa trade, and with peace, Kutch became less strategically important to others in India. Sadly, Pragmalji only ruled for fifteen years, and he died at age thirty-seven. Yet, in this short period he ended the slave trade and embarked on a large public works scheme for the state. For instance, when he inherited the throne there were only three schools in the realm; he left behind seventy-one. Pragmalji was succeeded by a boy of ten, Rao Khengarji, on January 3, 1876.[4]

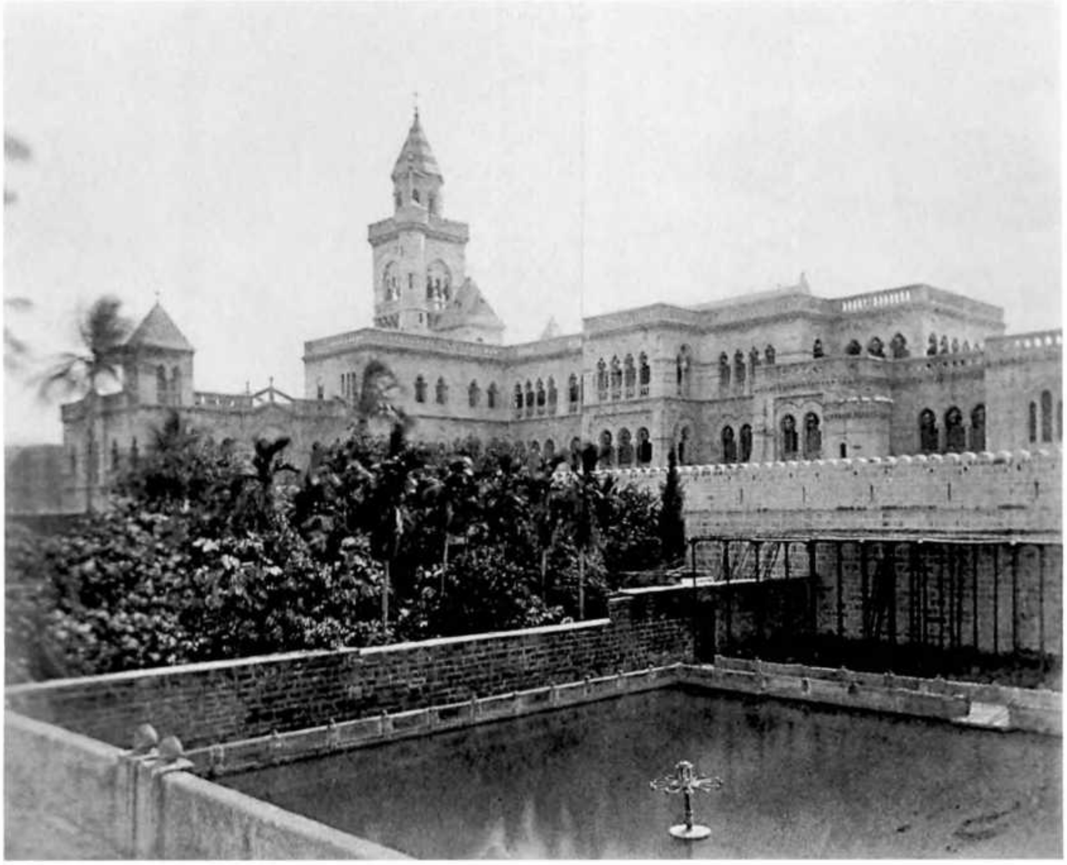
THE PRAG MAHAL PALACE

It is in this historic context that Rao Pragmalji commenced construction of the Prag Mahal palace at Bhuj in 1865.[5] It took over ten years to build and its construction cost over Rs 20 lakh (figures 1 and 2). Its architect was Colonel (later General) Henry Saint Clair Wilkins, RE (1828–96). Pragmalji may have come to know of Wilkins through Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere, KCB, GCSI (1815–84). Frere was Governor of Bombay and the Western Presidency in 1865, but



1

Distant view over the rooftops of Bhuj from the Prag Mahal's new clock-tower. Photographer: unknown, late 1870s. By permission of the British Library, 125/3(5).



2

New Palace at Bhuj, built 1865–75, H. St Clair Wilkins architect. A garden view showing an elevation which is difficult to see today. Photographer: unknown, late 1870s. By permission of the British Library, 125/3(7).

quite significantly he also had rendered a great service to Sindh, during the nine years 1850–59, just prior to his service as Governor. Frere, now justly renowned as a careful administrator, guided the province of Sindh safely through the 1857 upheavals in India. His actions were greatly appreciated at the time, and more than likely the court at Kutch would have both known and trusted his judgement as a result of this time of service.

Like his predecessor, Lakhpatji – whose support of and collaboration with Ramsingh Malam have been discussed – Pragmalji also wished to bring the latest in taste and decorative skill to his state, adding such talents to pre-existing Kutchi resources. So, the Prag Mahal palace was built in the Italian Gothic style, with a lofty bell tower 150 feet high (figures 3 and 4). Its construction employed a great many specialized artisans, all of whom were brought to Kutch.

> Skilled Italian decorators were engaged, who have taught the native workmen the art of moulding in terra cotta, of painting in oil, of imitating marble by staining, of laying marble pavements, of carving capitals and bases of columns, entablatures and friezes, of gilding, and a hundred other tasks of ornamentation. They have proved apt scholars, and the school of design finds pupils already far advanced, and capable of still further improvement.[6]

Records for construction of the palace are not complete. However, it is known that a Mr Paul Lenusi was contracted in 1872/73 and entrusted to complete the palace's decorations.[7] He was assisted by the supervising engineer of the "new palace", Mr Dhunjeebhai Sorabjee.[8] In the following two years (1873/74), four and three-quarter lakhs were spent on public building, more than half of which was money utilized for the

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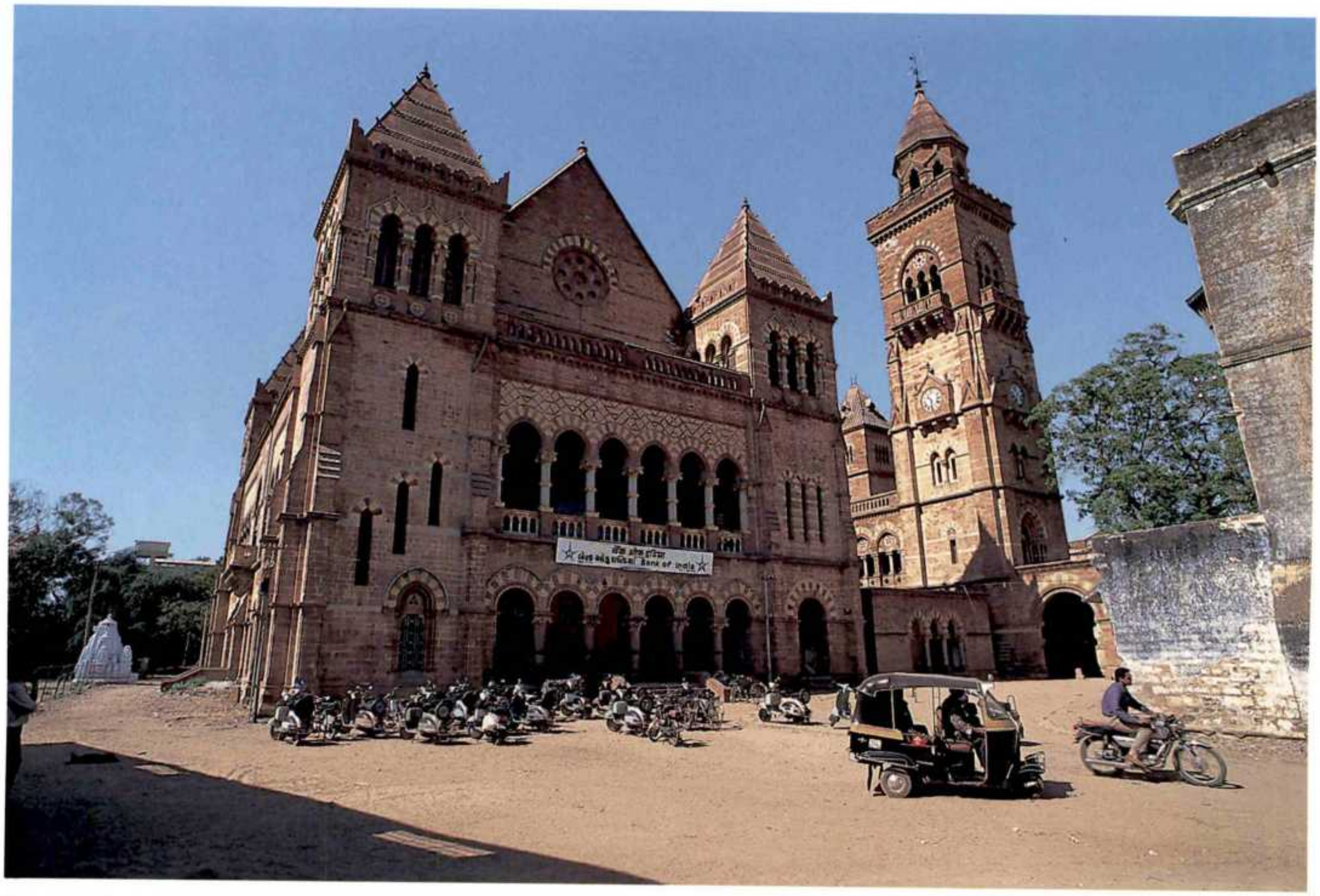
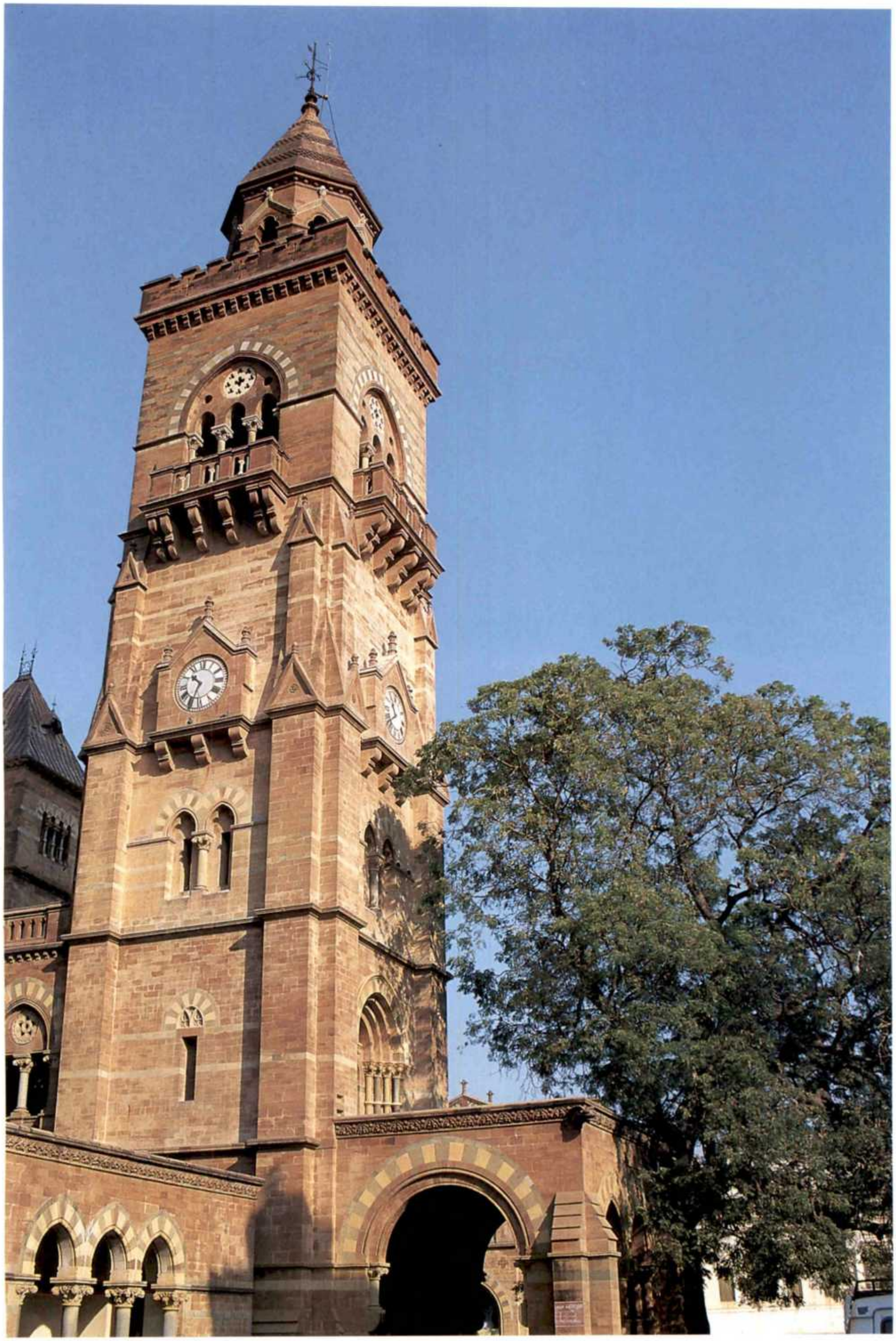


A recent view of the Prag Mahal compound. Photograph: Jyoti Bhatt.



4

A view of the bell-tower and clock. Photograph: Sunjoy Monga/Porpoise PhotoStock.

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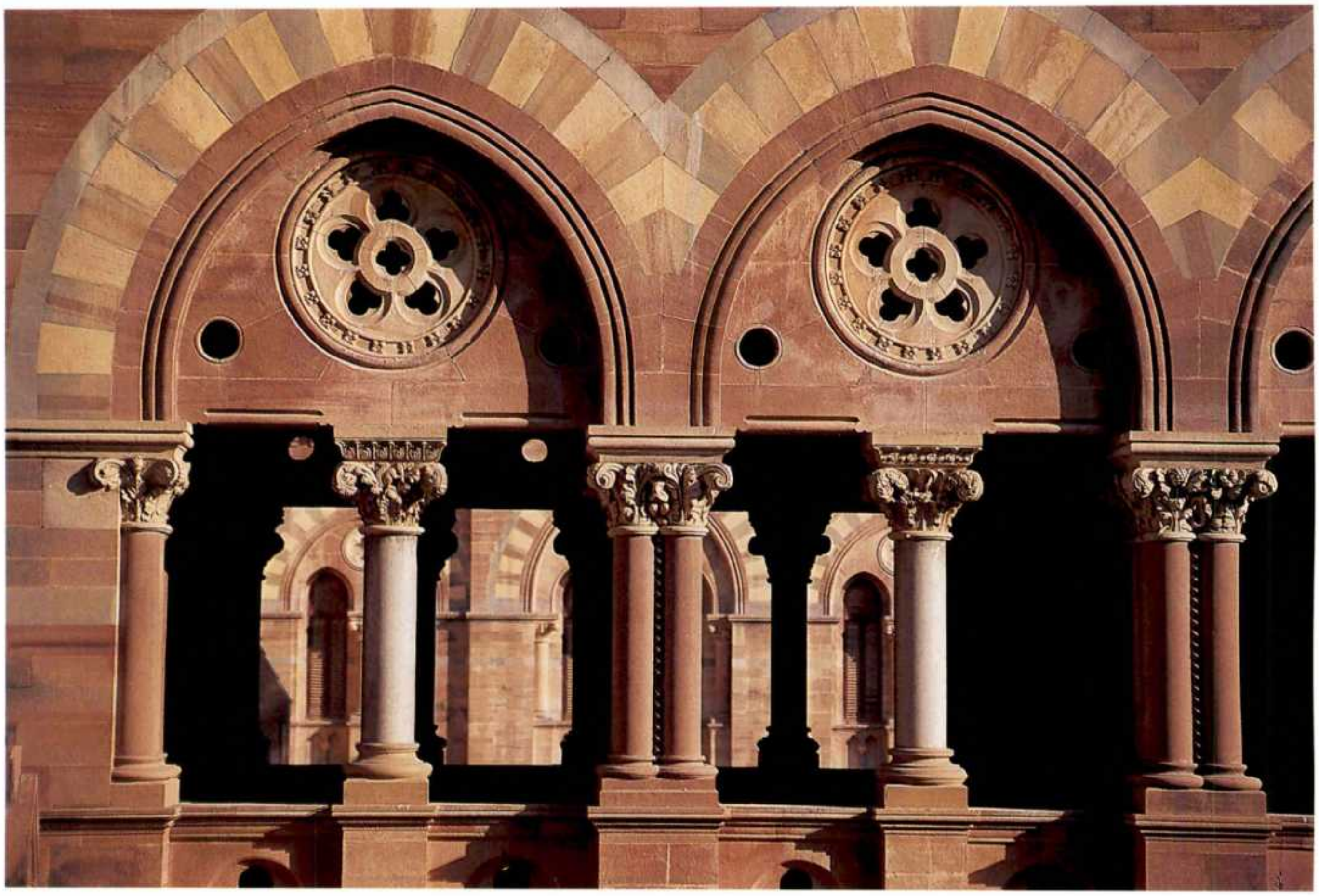

Detail of arches in the Prag Mahal. Photograph: Sunjoy Monga/Porpoise PhotoStock.

"new palace". However, the Prag Mahal was not to be completed for at least two more years.[9] In 1876 Rs 1,58,174 was spent on the new palace, and a further two lakhs was still needed to complete the building.

The Palace was built employing – and with the intent of showcasing – the various marbles of Kutch. The jet black marble is from the Habba quarry, the brown-yellow is from the Khavda quarry, the variegated marble is from the Dewara quarry, and all were used in the "new palace". The pale red-brick coloured stone used in the palace's construction also came from Kutch, and the combination of these stones affords the user a most opulent and yet instructive experience about the geological riches of Kutch (figure 5). When completed the agent noted:

> The new palace is a specimen of gothic architecture, beautifully decorated in the interior, in the Italian style. It is built of solid Cutch stone of pale red-brick colour, tastefully intermingled with a variety of Cutch marble. It was designed by Colonel Wilkins R.E. It has been under construction for the last ten years. It is one of the best mansions Western India can boast of. With its grand Darbár Hall, spacious rooms and verandas, and a lofty tower 150 feet high, commanding the view of the whole town of Bhuj and its suburbs, the palace, when completed and suitably furnished, will occupy a high position in the modern architecture of India.[10]

The same account then went on to state that "It is proposed to erect a building to accommodate the new School of Arts, to His Highness the Rao's Artillery, Printing Press, Bhuj Municipal Office, &c., near the palace, in Saracenic style, which will materially improve the appearance of the entrance to the palace."[11]

On January 1, 1877 the first grand darbar was held in the "new palace". Thus, its first use may have been for the celebration of Queen Victoria's assumption of the title Empress of India.[12] However, the building's patron had died in 1876, one year before this celebration took place. Just prior to the Rao's death, indeed the day before, Pragmalji signed a contract for the interior decoration of the Darbar Hall. The contract for this portion of the building work was to cost Rs 60,000, the Rao having paid as much previously for the marble pavements and side columns.[13] It is reasonable to assume that as this was one of the Rao's last acts, in anticipation of death, he felt strongly determined to see his building project completed. However, even in 1875, the stucco ornaments and the frescos had already begun to show signs of deterioration (figures 6 and 7).

By 1877/78, the annual repairs to the palace were Rs 70,063, which the "agent" noted he hoped would not become habitual, as otherwise the palace would become a "white elephant". The work accomplished was: painting the hall, completion of the gallery, and varnishing and glazing the doors and windows.[14] The clock in the clock-tower was fitted in 1879. It cost a large portion of the Rs 21,199 spent in that year on the building, in which plastering and gilding the lower portion of the walls, glazing and French polishing the doors etc. must also be included. The report goes on to note that "Rao Pragmulji wanted the grand staircase to be of Italian marble, but temporarily it was composed of wood, until the money was available to finish it in the proper materials, as the council did not wish to spend any more money on this building".

An overall assessment of the Prag Mahal must focus on its considerable contribution to the skyline of Bhuj, and its use of superb local materials in a thorough stylistic essay in the Italianate taste of the High Victorian Gothic (see figure 1). Its clock-tower and the way the palace joins the earlier complex of buildings is admirably managed, and it inserts both the new structure and all the new methods of working in stone seamlessly into Kutch traditions. Though much of the palace is closed to the public, and some of it is clearly in a state of disrepair, the interior of the Darbar Hall is an elegant space of bold sculptural detailing, massive proportions, and painted decoration highly unusual in all of India (figure 7). The hall's high ceiling keeps the room cool, the balcony on the second floor adds to the dramatic sense of height one has in the room, and the muscular atlantes figures which support the balcony bring a decorative element to India found nowhere else in the subcontinent.[15]

The atlantes figures of the Darbar Hall may derive from palaces seen by Wilkins on a visit he made either to Vienna or greater Austria on a furlough in which he returned to Europe, or through his examination of the volumes in which Percier and Fontaine published their designs for the Tuileries Palace of the Louvre, or through knowledge of C.R. Cockerell's designs for the Concert Hall of St George's Hall, Liverpool of 1851–54.[16] Regardless of the exact historic source for this design feature, its utterly European appearance and its unusual, grand, and aristocratic references enable further parallels to be drawn between the design of the Prag Mahal and the earlier Aina Mahal. For here, clearly, several sources of design inspiration can be seen to come directly from Europe. Their employment at Bhuj, on the exterior and the interior of the "new palace", brings to Kutch a quite unexpected level of sophistication in architectural effects. As in the Aina Mahal, the Prag Mahal's Darbar Hall interior materially demonstrates the court of Kutch's fascination with European taste, while its production in India with the craftsmen of Kutch enabled the inhabitants of this small state to experience or participate in the manufacture of the finest of European design without ever leaving home.

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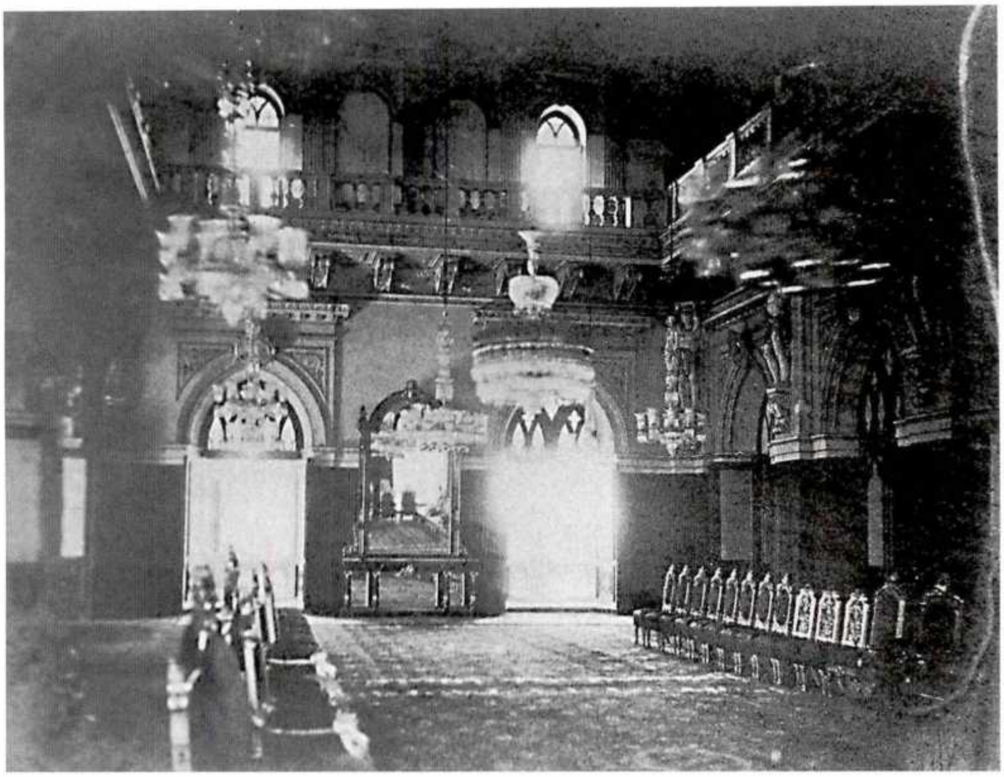
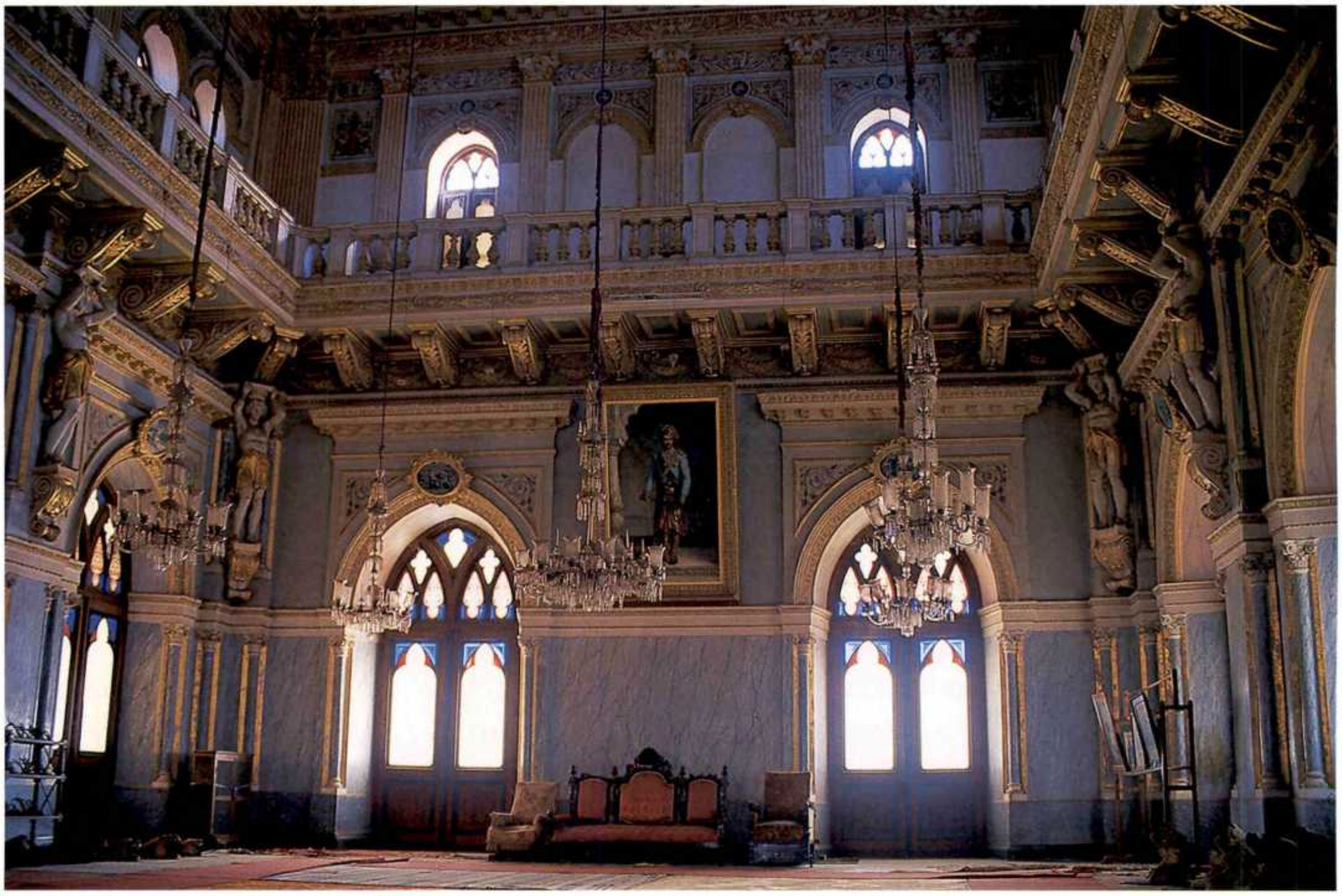


Darbar Hall of the Prag Mahal, showing how it was utilized soon after completion. Note the interior decoration, wall hangings, and furniture arrangement. Photographer: unknown, late 1870s. By permission of the British Library, 125/3(10).

7



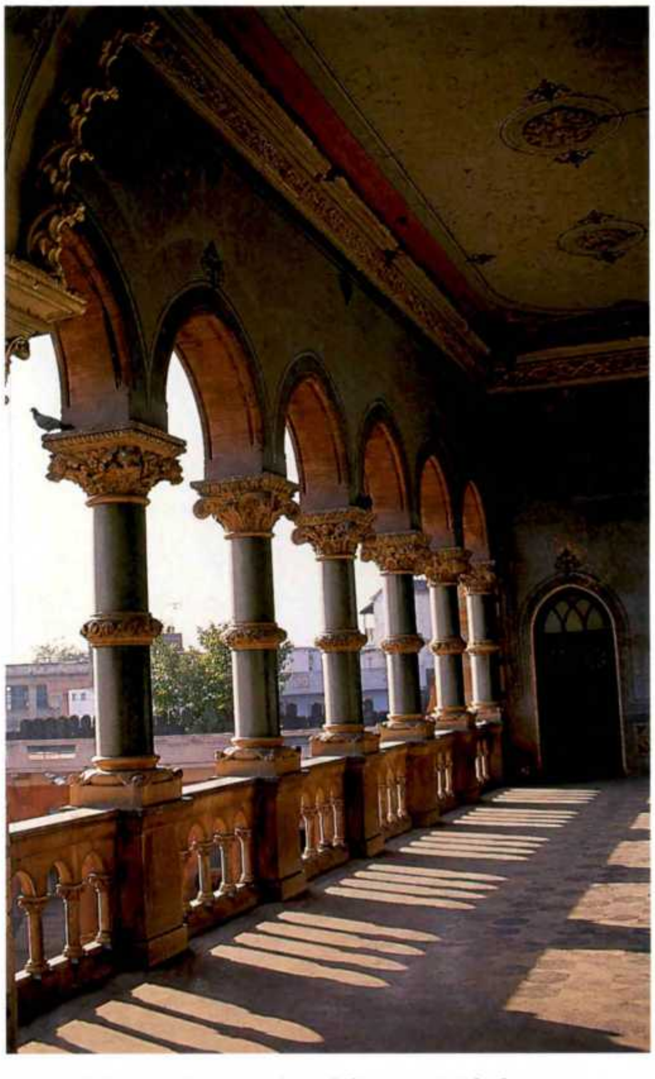
A recent view of the interior of the Darbar Hall. Note the atlantes figures standing on console brackets which support the balcony, the marble wall surfaces, and the opulent stucco work employed throughout. Photograph: Sunjoy Monga/Porpoise PhotoStock.

Thus, Pragmalji did succeed in continuing the artistic tradition of Lakhpatji for his principality, providing an up-to-date version of European taste at the centre of his court's activities. Clearly, the Prag Mahal's overall impact on the visitor is very memorable, but how did the architect of this project come to Bhuj and India, and why was the Italianate Gothic style chosen for his work?

THE ITALIANATE GOTHIC STYLE

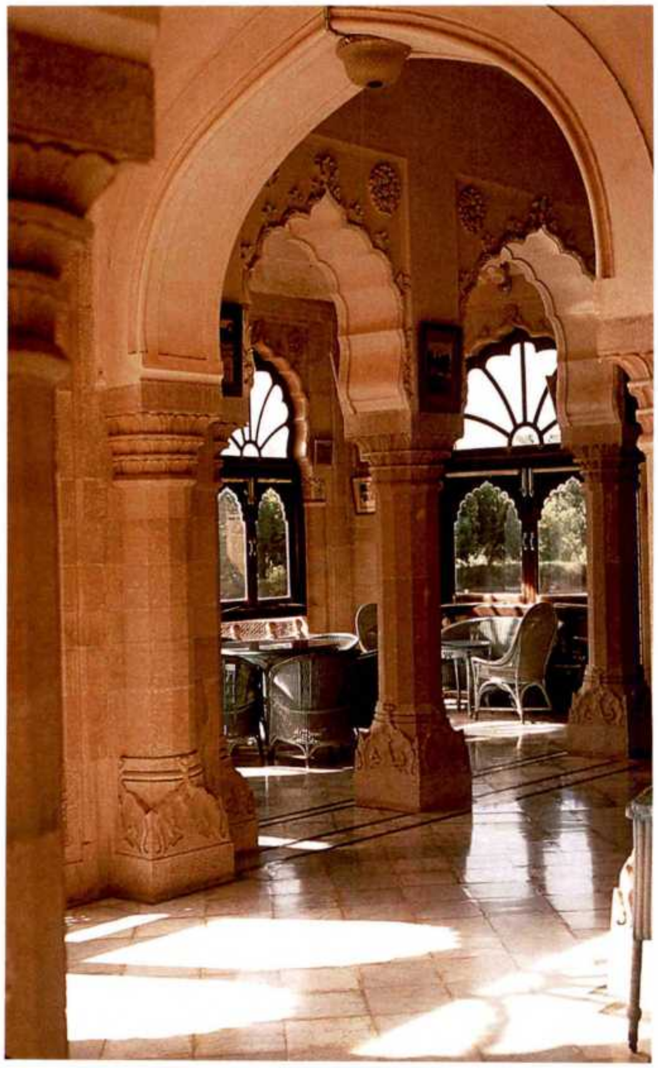
The Italianate Gothic style was to Britain and much of Europe in the 1860s and '70s what the "Modern" style of architecture similarly became to the world in the 1940s and '50s – the most prevalent and fashionable method to build in. During the prior twenty years the Gothic style of the late middle ages had received a great reassessment of its design virtues. Part of this reaction in Britain can be credited to John Ruskin and his writings, such as *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) or *The Stones of Venice* (1851/53), but it can also be attributed to A.W.N. Pugin and his designs for the Houses of Parliament (1835–67), or the influence of the Ecclesiologists (a society which published an influential journal), or the conflicting positions taken during G.G. Scott's struggle to design the Foreign Office (1857) – as to which style would be used, the Classical or the Gothic.

In the broadest sense, the same reaction in taste is evidenced in painting by the rise of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (circa 1848 and following) or in other areas, through the admiration and interest expressed for the "natural" world, in reaction to the "industrial" world, which newly enveloped the Victorians.[17] The Gothic style appeared to be true, honest, handmade and from a more lyrical and idyllic period of the British past than the Classical style and its associates. The Victorians found the Classical style to be visually bland, lacking in individuality, rigour, and interest. In contrast, the Gothic style expressed its architectural functions upon its external form. Its massing was bold and richly sculptured, its turreted and asymmetrical effects were greatly desired and admired. Though such positions are generalized polemic ones, the aesthetic struggle became intensely important to the people of that era, and much of nineteenth-century Indian architecture vividly reflects the outcome and changes wrought by these conflicting points of view. In India, the verandas and external corridors of the Gothic style made it peculiarly suited to the Indian climate, for such features helped maintain cool, shaded interiors with their sun-breaking structural elements (figures 8 and 9). The fine craftsmanship of Indian stonemasons permitted large buildings in



8

View of the arcaded corridor of the Prag Mahal, note pointed arches, marble floors, and coloured stones employed. Photograph: Sunjoy Monga/Porpoise PhotoStock.



9

A veranda in Vijay Vilas, Mandvi. Photograph: Christopher W. London.

this style to be heavily worked in sculptural detail, and the Indian preference for strong colours was well-prepared to accept the similar colour preferences and materials so beloved of the Goths. The rich detailing of Indian interiors was also open to parallel decorative concepts provided within the Gothic vocabulary. In this way, the Gothic style came to be adopted for many building projects on the subcontinent. Wilkins was one of its finest Indian practitioners.

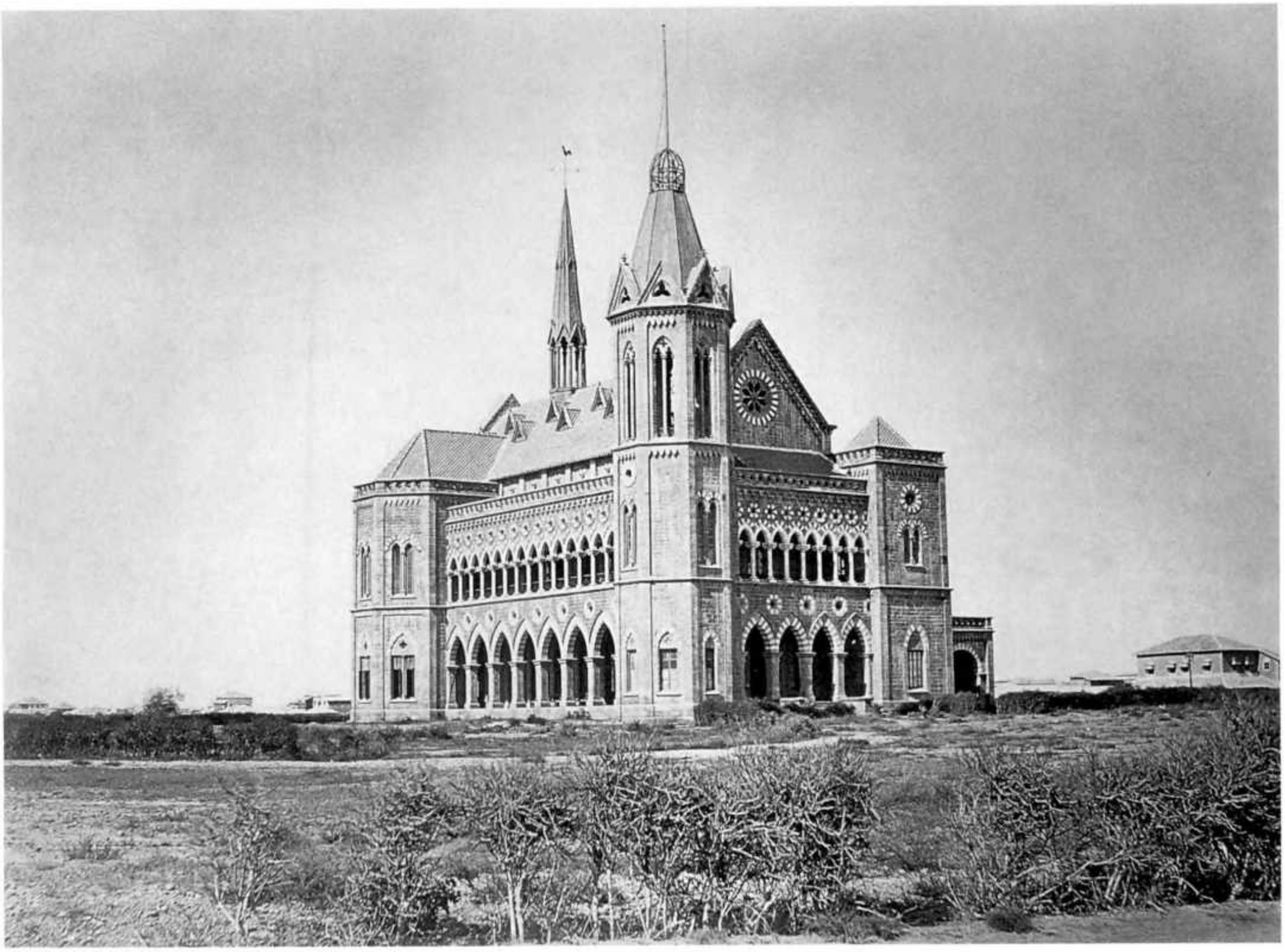
HENRY ST CLAIR WILKINS

Before H. St Clair Wilkins was approached by Pragmalji to design the palace at Bhuj, he already had succeeded in creating a busy and flourishing career for himself. Wilkins joined the Bombay Engineers in 1847.[18] Prior to his arrival in Bombay he had worked on the waterworks in Aden. His first work in Bombay, and probably also his first architectural commission, was the "Dhurumsalla" of 1847.[19] This was variously a gaol or a poorhouse; in Bombay's case, it was the former. Wilkins' design was a functional structure of three storeys and seven bays of little architectural interest.[20] He took a furlough to Britain in 1854, and returned to active service with an appointment of Assistant Executive Engineer on May 11, 1855.[21] He then returned to the "Western Presidency" at Aden before taking up his architectural post in Poona.[22] In Poona he built the Deccan College (1864–68), the Sassoon Hospital (1863–67) (A), St Paul's Church with George Twigge Molecey (1863–67) (B), and the Ohel David Synagogue with Molecey (1867–68) (C).[23] St Paul's Church was modelled on the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, and was yet another essay in the Gothic style, for which Frere laid the foundation stone on September 3, 1863. The Ohel David Synagogue was described as:

> the most striking building in Poona.... The general effect of the building is rich and massive, and we venture to think that few Indian stations possess a non-official building, of modern date, fully equal to it.[24]

The Deccan College also received praise in *The Times of India*. It was described as a Venetian Gothic structure, the style chosen for Wilkins' New Secretariat in Bombay, and designed at almost the same time.

There was another building in this style also designed by him, and successfully completed only a month after his proposal for the New Secretariat was submitted. This was his Frere Hall, Karachi, in the adapted Venetian Gothic style, begun in August 1863 and completed on October 10, 1865[25] (figure 10). Designs for the Frere Hall were put out to competition, and of the twelve designs submitted, ten from India and two from Britain, Wilkins' proposal was adjudicated the best. The



10

Frere Hall, Karachi, built 1863–65, H. St Clair Wilkins architect. Photographer: unknown, 1870s. By permission of the British Library, 96/1(52).

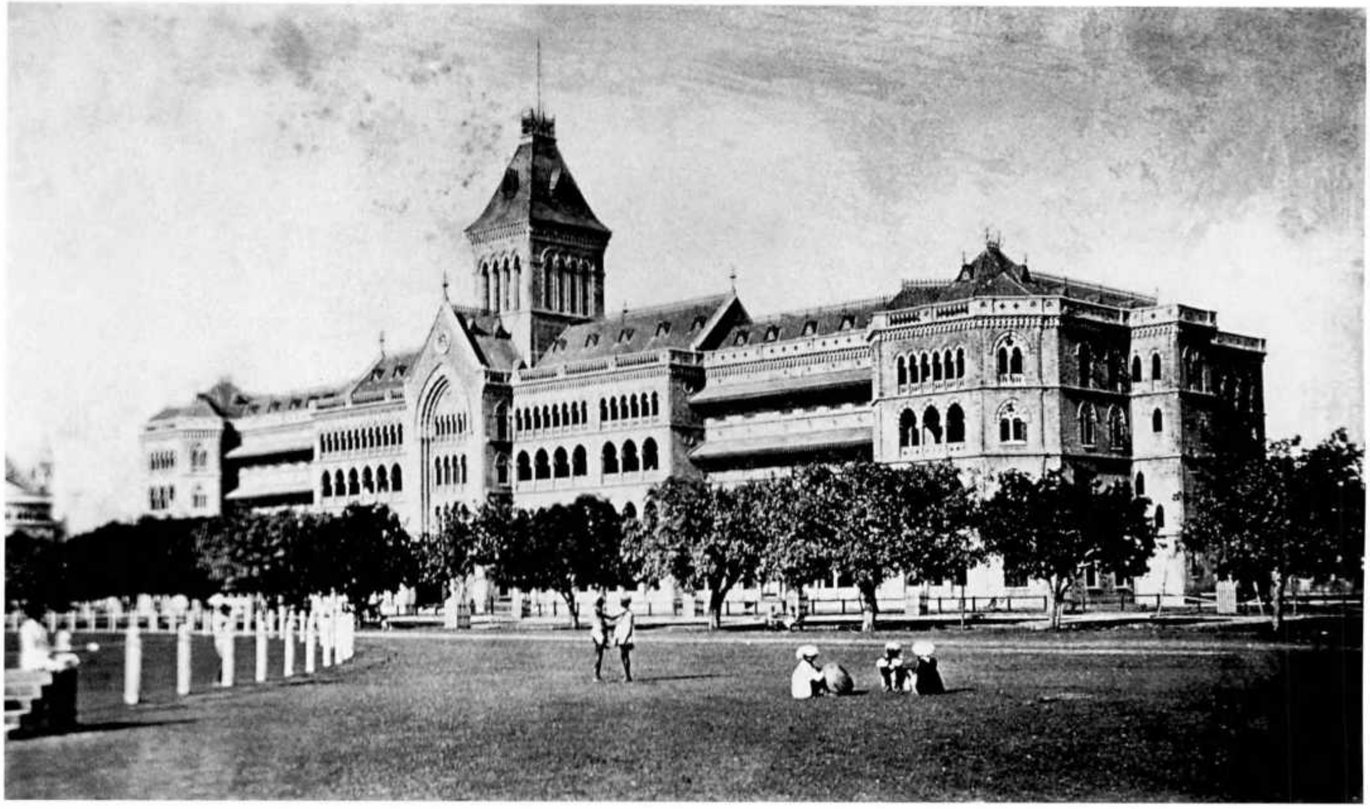
Hall, comprising a library and an auditorium for concerts and lectures, was a memorial to Frere, built largely in gratitude for the service he rendered to the province of Sindh. It may be the connection of Frere with Sindh and Sindh with the court of Kutch which introduced Wilkins' work to Pragmalji. Indeed, Pragmalji may even have attended the opening of the Hall, though at the very least he would have heard all about the building earlier than this, due to the connections listed above. When this connection is coupled with the great rate of "official" building activity we see in Wilkins' career during this period, the recommendation by the agent of the British Government to the Rao of Kutch is also a most likely route for his assignment of this commission.[26]

Wilkins' other work in India included a design for the J.J. School of Art which was not used (A), a design for Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's house (B), a design for the "Victoria Museum" (C), an unsuccessful competition bid for the European General Hospital (D), and an unsuccessful design for the Camp Church in Aden (E).[27]

WILKINS IN BOMBAY

Wilkins' first documented activity for work in Bombay took place in 1864, but it was not until 1866–67, when his posting at Poona ended, that he was transferred to Bombay.[28] He came to work on Governor Frere's set of fourteen grand public buildings listed in a speech given when the ramparts of the old Fort walls were removed. Upon Wilkins' arrival, he was requested to design

11



The Secretariat Building, Government Offices at Bombay, built 1867–74, H. St Clair Wilkins architect. Photographer: T.W. Scaddan, 1875–76. By permission of the British Library, 475(39).

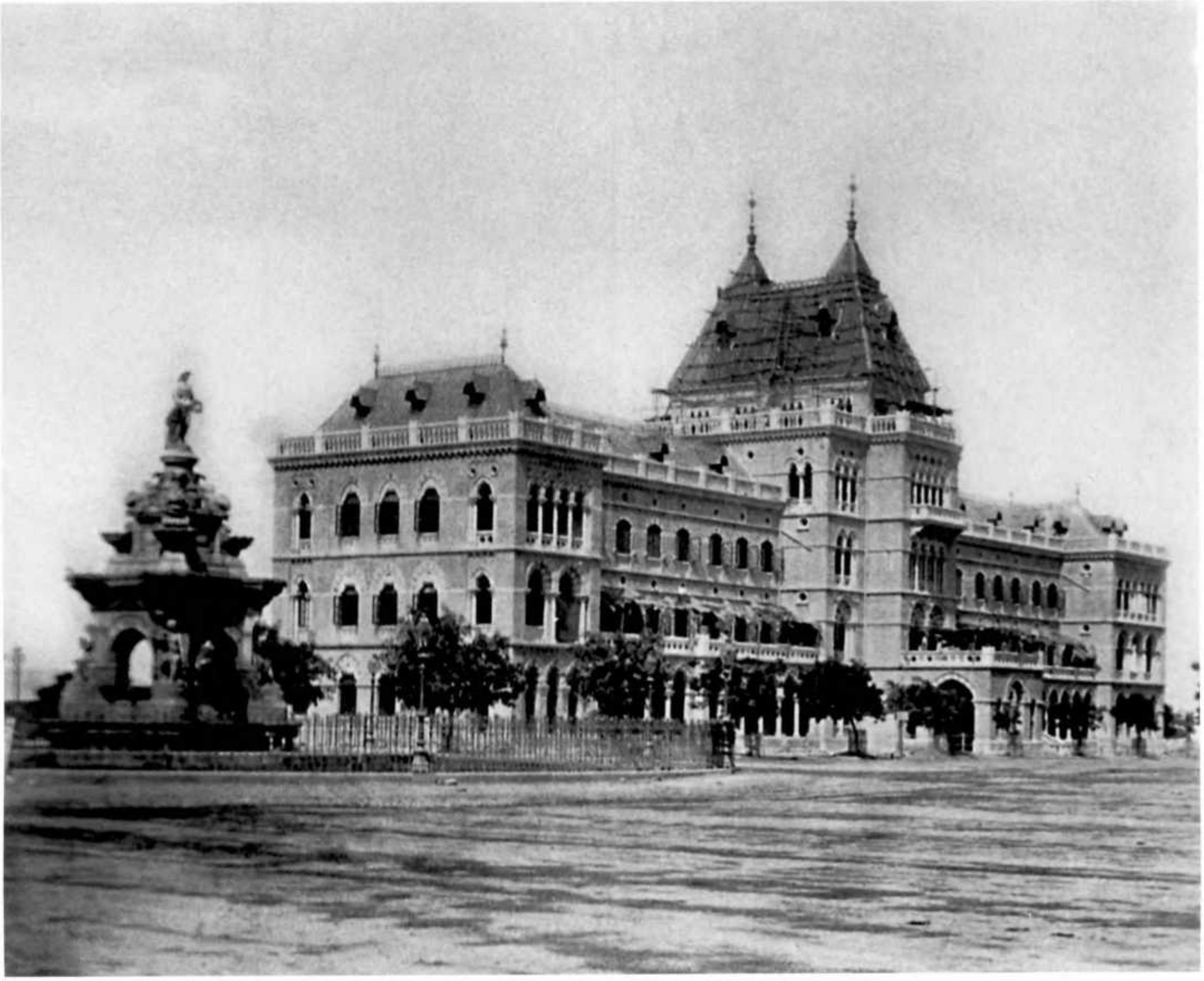
the New Secretariat, an imposing urban symbol for Bombay, and in both size and expense Wilkins' most ambitious project to date (figure 11). It stands to the south of the University Buildings on the Esplanade facing the Oval, and was begun on April 16, 1867 and opened on March 20, 1874.[29]

The building, oriented along a north-south axis, faced west on to Backbay. This was to admit "... the sea breeze into almost every portion of the edifice. In Bombay this is a point of the utmost importance."[30] Like the Prag Mahal it possessed a tower, here a centrally located one 170 feet high. The materials used in construction were blue basalt rubble masonry faced with roughly-dressed Kurla (buff colour basalt), in 7 to 8 inch courses. The polychromatic stonework was obtained by using buff coloured Porbunder stone, Kurla stone, local blue basalt, Poona red basalt, Ransome's patent stone, and Hemnagar silicious sandstone, all neatly finished. The colours for each floor were varied: blue basalt and buff Porbunder employed for corridor arches on the ground floor, red basalt and buff Porbunder used on the first floor, and for the first time, Ransome's patent stone was used for the outer cornice of the second floor.[31] The Hemnagar stone was reserved for use on the capitals, cornices, and small corridor shafts of the building.

This also parallels the work in Kutch, for the stone was "local" to Bombay, and its use displayed these resource materials, reserving for them a niche which saw them used over and over again in succeeding Bombay structures. Broomhall tiles over teakwood joists and planking roofed the structure, and Minton tiles were used for the pavements. The building was partially fireproof, with floors supported by iron girders infilled with concrete sounding over the tiles, or with concrete poured over Porbunder stone, a novelty for Bombay which reveals the engineering interests Wilkins utilized for his projects. It was also one of the first to pursue a complete Gothic decorative scheme, for even the office furniture was made by the PWD, to John Adams' designs, in teak inlaid with blackwood.[32]

As the first building erected on the new Esplanade formed by Frere's planning, the precedents set here also proved to be important as guidelines for the rest of the work done in Bombay. The Secretariat was also the first to be designed, supervised, and erected by the PWD from resources available within the department, and within a series of guidelines and recommendations outlined for the government by Thomas Roger Smith (1830–1903), after his visit to Bombay in 1865.[33] In Smith's paper addressed to the Hon. Claudius Erskine and the Bombay Council, all the possible combinations and methods of approaching and designing large building projects were discussed and questioned, with their pros and cons enumerated. The approach chosen for the construction of the Secretariat was, in the opinion of Smith, the preferable one for building under the conditions present in Bombay.

Being the initial large PWD designed building on the Esplanade, its attention to detail, colour, and scale is admirable, and *The Times of India* quoted a special correspondent who said the design "does him infinite credit".[34] Furthermore, it employed Indian craftsmen, used local materials when possible, and established that the government could rely upon these sources with as much or greater success than materials and expertise from Britain. Such practices are further



12

Public Works Office, Bombay, built 1869–72, H. St Clair Wilkins architect. Photographer: D.H. Sykes & Co., circa 1872. By permission of the British Library, 140(38).

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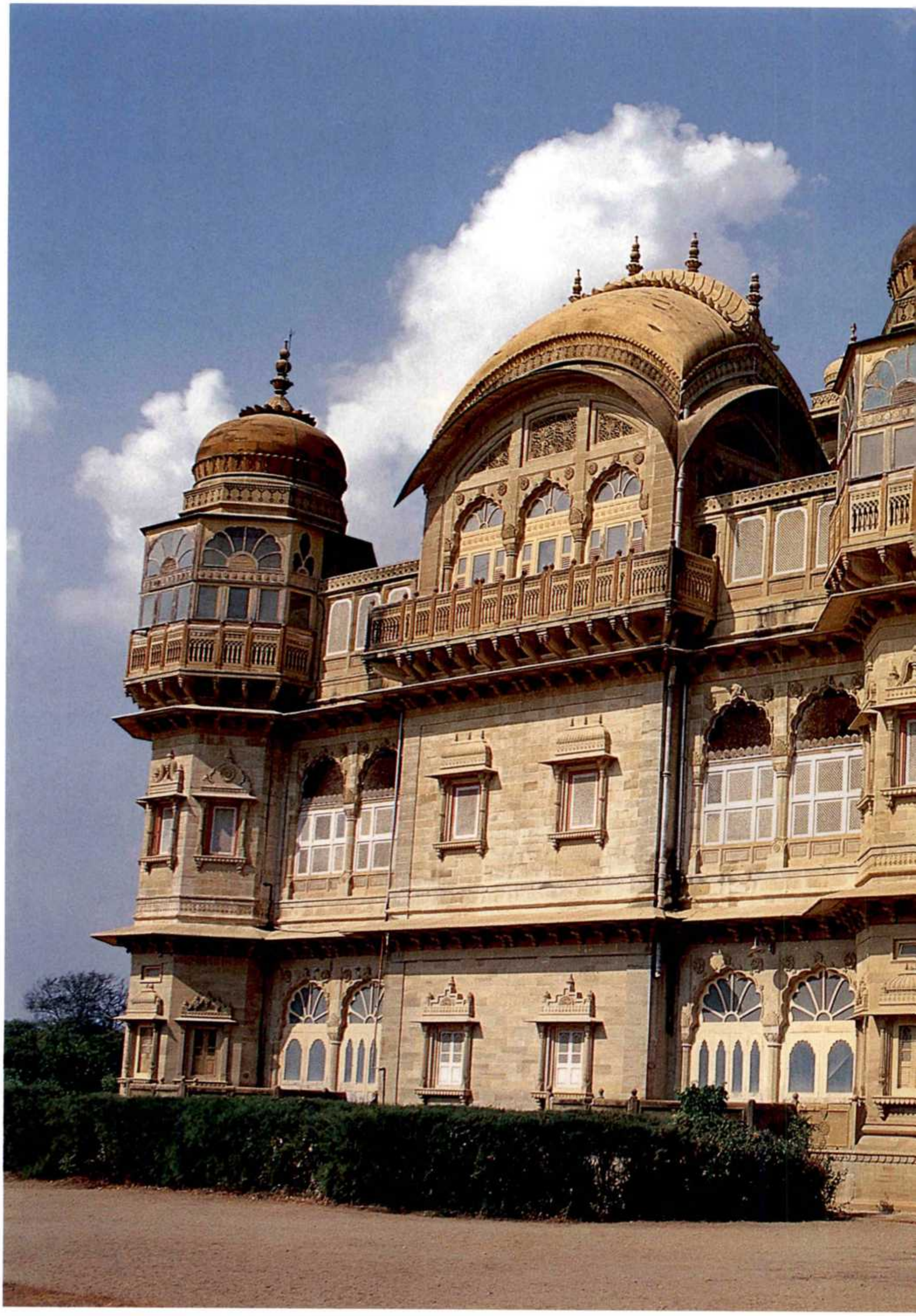
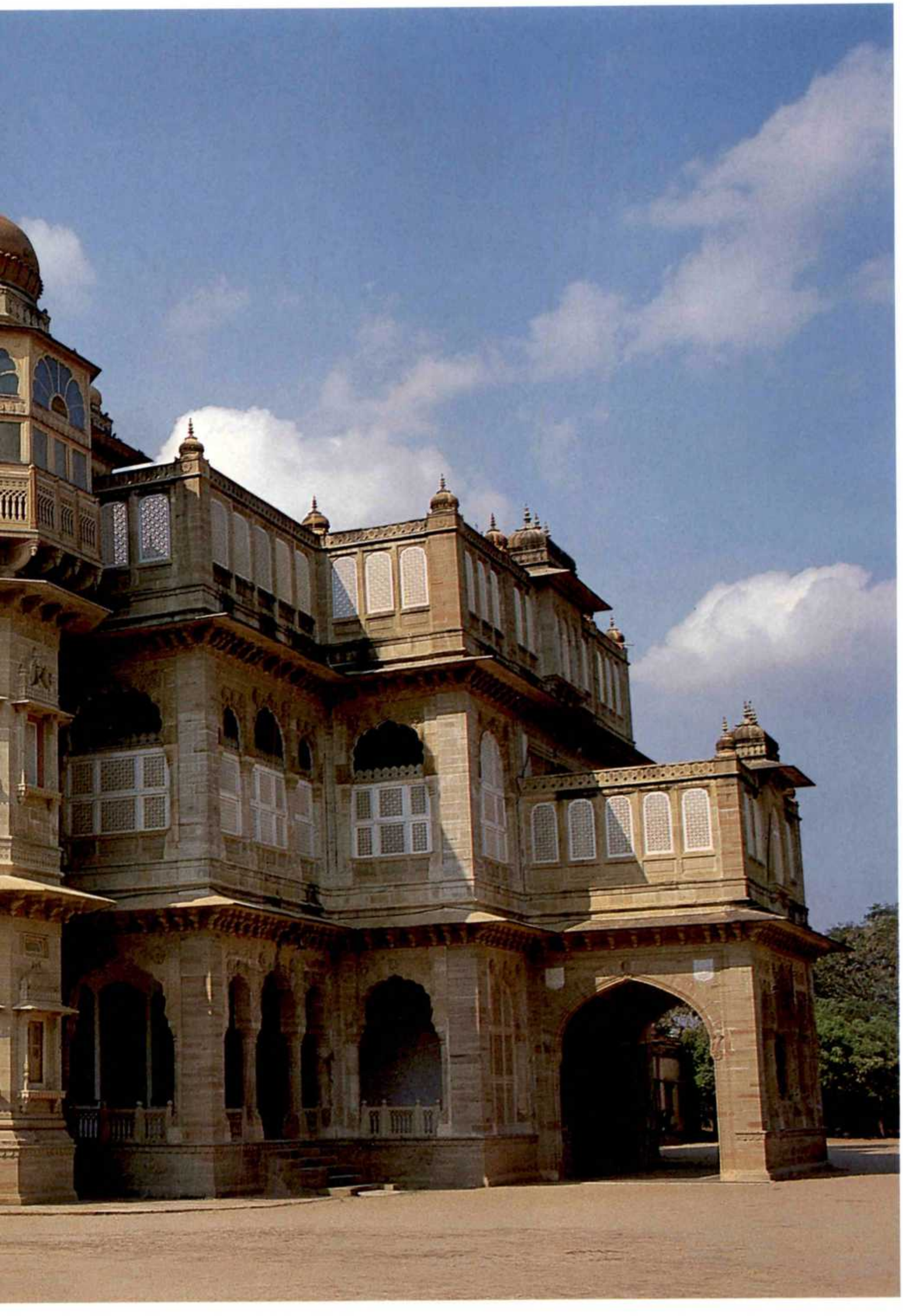


The Indo-Saracenic styled Vijay Vilas, Mandvi, view from the garden. Photograph: Sunjoy Monga/Porpoise PhotoStock.



confirmed and expanded upon by Wilkins' work at Bhuj of the same period, and indeed this method of building was also one of Governor Frere's most earnest desires:

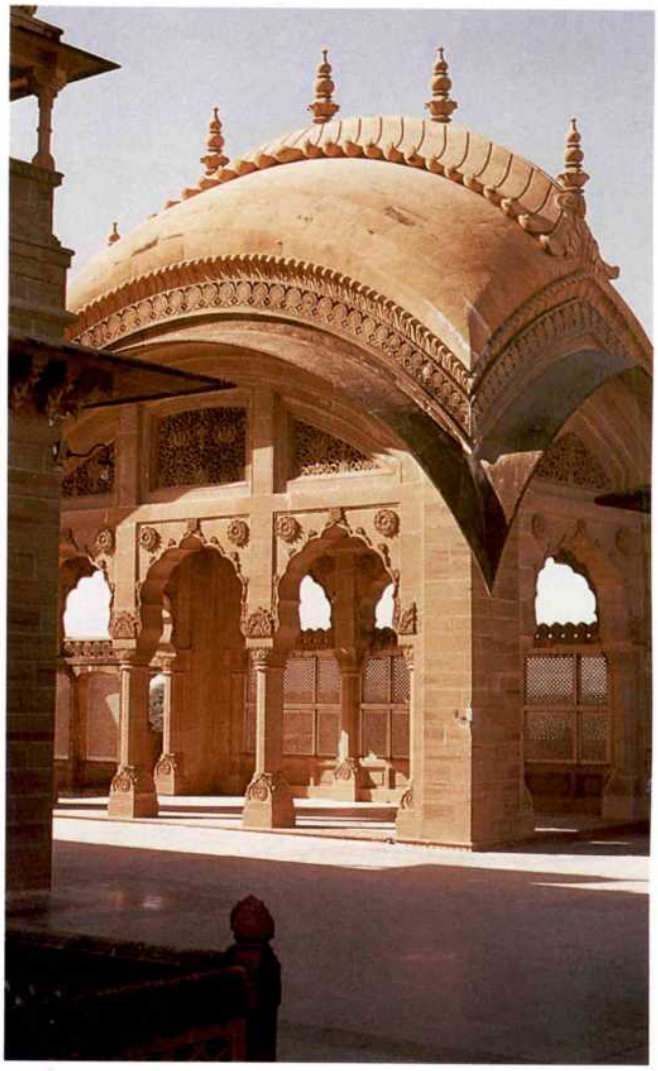
> The resource of sending home to England for ironwork, brasswork, terracotta, glass, and even carved stone, has been tried again and again, but there is great difficulty in obtaining exactly what is wanted; and probably in every case the less this sort of assistance is relied upon the better, for the risks of transit as well as other sources of disappointment largely interfere with its efficiency.[35]

As the first building to attempt construction on this scale and in this manner at Bombay, it should be viewed as a success. By no means the most beautiful building in the city, still its construction was innovative, carefully detailed, and solidly made. The building's functional and heavy appearance would have been admired at the time, as "true to the nature" of both the materials employed, and the disposition and use of its interior rooms. Wilkins had improved his ability for design when he received the commission for the Public Works Secretariat, but then it was on a smaller scale, like his work in Poona. If there are flaws in this design's attractiveness, they are less obvious at a distance, when the architect's unfamiliarity with proportion is better disguised. However, this remains one of the most difficult skills for any architect to master, and despite such flaws, the embellishment of the interior and exterior with rich sculptural detail would have been admired by many British architects working in Britain.

The second building in Bombay designed by Wilkins was the Public Works Office, situated near his earlier construction on the Esplanade, at the intersection with Church Gate Street (figure 12). Directly opposite the former Post Office, it was sensitive to this juxtaposition in scale and design. It was begun on May 4, 1869 and completed on April 1, 1872.[36] There were ten tenders for the commission, Scott and McClelland were selected, and when completed it cost Rs 4,14,484.[37]

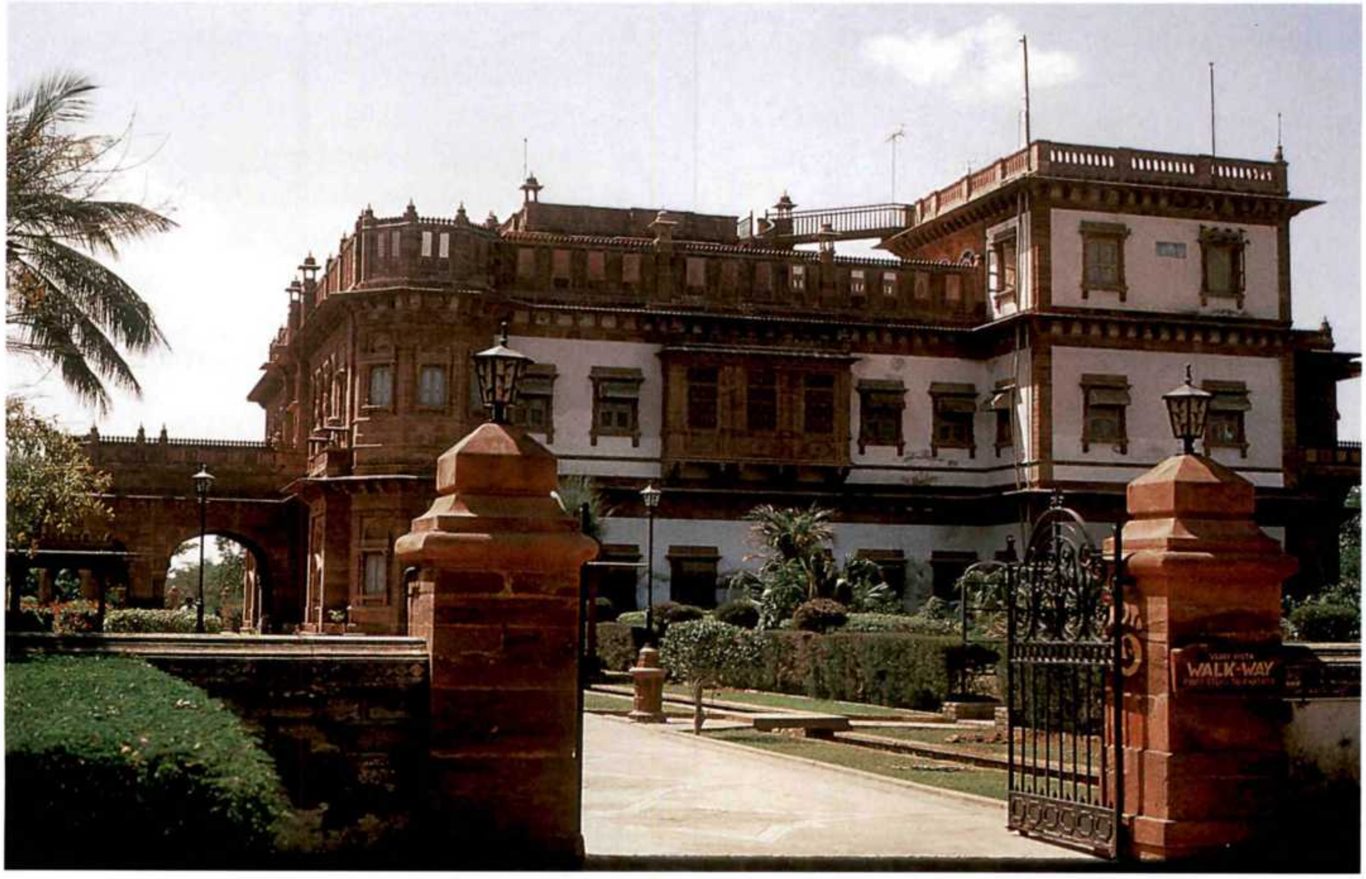
The building, three storeys or 54 feet in height, has an east-west axis with the main facade on the north, not the preferred orientation for ventilation. Its frontage has thirty-six bays, 288 feet long, three storeys with arcades, and a fourth, set behind a balustrade and incorporated into the roof. Arcades which provided corridors and shade from the sun were used on every side but the east, negating the need for the kind of awnings employed on the Secretariat, and helping to clarify the composition.

Wilkins stated that the style of the PWD Building should be in keeping with the New Secretariat, and despite many alterations the



14

Vijay Vilas, Mandvi, rooftop detail. Photograph: Christopher W. London.



15

Ranjit Vilas, Bhuj, view of the exterior elevation. Photograph: Christopher W. London.

government honoured this request. It was in a polychromatic Venetian Gothic style and shares with other buildings in "Frere Town" similar building materials.[38] The PWD Offices are a more powerful, varied, and finer composition than the Secretariat. The subdivisions within the building have been better expressed, the treatment of the various elements of the facade made into a more balanced and stronger whole and the scale better understood.

CONCLUSION

After Wilkins' Prag Mahal at Bhuj was complete, the Raos continued to build impressive and stylistically current structures for their own use. Mandvi has a large and beautiful Indo-Saracenic style palace, Vijay Vilas (circa 1929), located adjacent to the gulf (figures 13 and 14), and at Bhuj Ranjit Vilas was also built in the same style (figure 15). These later works incorporate superb local Indian craftsmanship with modern Western comforts and lifestyle arrangements, but full consideration of them should be in another article. Let this essay conclude with their acknowledgement, and the understanding that all the palaces of the Raos of Kutch are special, but that clearly the earlier work, including the Prag Mahal, truly broke new ground and added stylistic diversity to the cultural riches of India. The earlier palaces employed the leading architectural talent or designers of the day at their court, and with Wilkins, astounding results were achieved by a busy and prominent architect who was best known until now for his work in Bombay.

NOTES

1. Notes from L.F. Rushbrook Williams, *The Black Hills. Kutch in History and Legend*, London, 1958, p. 9.

2. He ruled 1860–75. See James Burgess, *Archaeological Survey of Western India – Architectural & Archaeological Remains in the Province of Kachh*, Bombay, 1879, which contains a genealogical table of the rulers of Kutch.

3. 1809 marked the first formal agreement between the Jadeja rulers and the East India Company. The treaty enabled the Kutch aristocracy to reserve all their ancient privileges, only paying *nazrana* on the ruler's accession, his marriage, and the birth of a son. This was followed, in 1812, by Lt. Macmurdo's efforts to suppress piracy.

4. The birth of the male heir took place on August 23, 1866. Pragmalji was twenty-eight years old and had seven wives. A daughter had been born on November 28, 1861.

5. Bombay Political Department - R/2/18A (101/123) 1877 Pol. Dept. "Report on the Administration of Kutch for the year 1876/77". Rao Pragmalji died at Bhuj on January 1, 1876 of Bright's Disease.

6. Ibid., for the year 1875/76.

7. Bombay Political Department - R/2/18A (89/131) 1874 Pol. Dept. "Report on the Administration of Kutch for the year K.S. 1929, A.D. 1872/73".

8. Bombay Political Department - R/2/18A (83/97), p. 21, Item 45 – The years 1871–72. A further 5,22,058 koris is spent on the Prag Mahal, and the works are carried on with vigour. It goes on to note further that "Mr Dhunjubhai" – the superintendent of the Palace works – has been reduced in his duties to those of supervision only on behalf of His Highness.

9. See note 7, No. 852.

10. See note 5.

11. Ibid., Item 198.

12. This is at least, most likely, the first "grand" use of the building by the court and visitors to Kutch for a "state occasion".

13. New stables and a jail were also built with a portion of the Rs 60,000 in funds. See note 5.

14. Bombay Political Department - R/2/18A (109/113) 1878 Pol. Dept. "Report on the Administration of Kutch for the year 1877/78", Item 196.

15. In the case of the Prag Mahal, the atlantes support a balcony, and the prototypes appear to be from Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723), an Austrian architect. One can see this element used to dramatic effect in his Liechtenstein Palace, Minoritenplatz, Vienna (1687–1700) or the Sepulchral Church of Ferdinand II, Graz (1687–1714), or Prince Eugene of Savoy's Palace, Himmelfortgasse, Vienna (1693–1708), or the Bohemian Court Offices, Wipplingerstrasse, Vienna (1712–14). See H. Sedlmayr, *Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Architetto,* Milan, 1996.

16. Charles Robert Cockerell (1788–1863) took up and finished Harvey Lonsdale Elmes' (1814–47) work on St George's. The concert hall has caryatids supporting a balcony, a feature used to great effect in this space. See D. Watkin, *The Life and Work of C.R. Cockerell,* London, 1974, or R. Middleton and D. Watkin, *Neo-classical and 19th Century Architecture,* New York, 1980, for other examples.

17. Darwin explored the "natural" world with scientific methods producing extraordinary results, and photography explored the same territory in equally startling ways, to name but two more examples.

18. *The Building News,* vol. 71, 1896, p. 935. This is the obituary notice. He was born on December 3, 1828 and died December 15, 1896 in Kensington. He was appointed General in 1879, and made an ADC to the Queen before his retirement from service.

19. He was aided in his work on the dharamsala by T.M.B. Turner. See IOL Records [(418-421 X C) Z/E/4 (66)].

20. B.H. Shete, *Bombay, A Photorama 1661–1931,* Bombay, 1981, illustrated as Byculla Prison. See also F. Nissen, *Bombay – Wealth in Decay: the Fabric for Conservation,* Exhib. Cambridge, 1984, pl. no. 121.

21. Maharashtra State Archives, Public Works Department (1855), vol. 2, no. 300.

22. MSA, PWD (1856), vol. 5, no. 631.

23. (A) The Sassoon Hospital was begun on October 8, 1863 and opened on October 9, 1867. See *Times of India* for the later date. See also MSA, PWD (1867), vol. 31, no. 607. Wilkins' fee for the design was Rs 2,390. The work was completed in August 1867. It cost Rs 31,000 including a roof of iron sent out from England.
(B) *Times of India,* September 3, 1863, p. 2, gives a description and dimensions. Frere laid the foundation stone. MSA, PWD (1867), vol. 33, no. 289, cites Molecey's design work on the carriage porch and it gives details on the opening ceremony. (C) *The Bombay Builder,* vol. IV, 1868, p. 89. This building was begun September 29, 1867 and opened in 1868. The probable patron was perhaps the Sassoon family as there is an elaborate Sassoon memorial mausoleum in the compound.

24. *Times of India,* December 30, 1867, p. 2.

25. *Indian Engineering,* vol. XI, 1892, p. 252, illustrated.

26. Frere Hall, two storeys tall, was built of limestone with sandstone details. It has arcaded verandas picked out in polychromatic stonework, a tower in one corner, and a porte-cochere at the entrance door. Its construction used teakwood, Minton and Taylor tiles, and had a Muntz metal roof.

27. (A) MSA, PWD (1865), vol. 25, no. 223. A temporary structure designed by Trubshawe was used instead. (B) MSA, PWD (1866), vol. 27, no. 118. This was to be between Rampart Row and Church Gate Street. A structure two storeys tall, 100 x 60 feet, with arcades and built of Sewri and Porbunder stone was proposed. I cannot locate the building, and believe it to be demolished or unbuilt. (C) MSA, PWD (1861), vol. 41, no. 938. This was an unused design for the V&A Museum, Byculla. He was paid Rs 200 for the work, enabling him to afford hiring an assistant in September 1861. (D) *Times of India*, January 2, 1865. The plans, appearance, and scale of this building are interesting, like the J.J. School of Art, for although it was not built, later designs were influenced by the proposal. Both the Secretariat by Wilkins, and the High Court by Fuller use this central open staircase, and extremely similar floor plans. The Secretariat in particular looks most similar to this building though reduced in size and adapted in use. Though Wilkins won the competition, the commission went to Thomas Roger Smith (*Times of India*, January 2, 1865). Wilkins' unsuccessful bid to construct the hospital project, but victory in the open competition, indicate how highly valued his work was at the time the Prag Mahal commission occurred. (E) MSA, PWD (1863), vol. 41, no. 515. Fuller won the commission. Wilkins was also the superintendent of the Roorkee Engineering College in 1866. See MSA, PWD (1866), vol. 35, no. 1042. Here he describes the course structure of the school. Wilkins also worked on the restoration of ancient buildings at Bijapur. See his obituary notice (note 18). He also published two books: *Treatise on Mountain Roads, Live Roads and Bridges* (London and Byculla, 1879) and *Reconnoitring in Abyssinia* (London, 1870). For the former see also *Indian Engineering*, vol. III, 1888, p. 111.

28. That year he won an architectural competition with his design of the European General Hospital (see note 27).

29. *Times of India*, August 30, 1875, p. 2. Designs for the structure were submitted a year and a half earlier on September 29, 1865. It was built for Rs 12,60,844, approximately Rs 20,000 less than its estimate.

30. MSA, PWD (1866), vol. 28, no. 143. This record gives a complete estimate, description, floor plan, and two working designs for columns.

31. *Times of India*, June 1, 1871, p. 3.

32. *The Builder*, vol. 33, 1875, p. 1039. This cites John Adams (1845–1920) as the designer.

33. MSA, PWD (1866), vol. 32, no. 762.

34. *Times of India*, July 16, 1875, p. 2.

35. *The Architect*, vol. 9, 1873, p. 137.

36. *The Builder*, vol. 32, 1874, pp. 437-39, illustrated. The contractors were Scott & McClelland. Wilkins' designs were prepared by him while on furlough in Europe during the winter and spring of 1867. See MSA, PWD (1867), vol. 30, no. 208, p. 1 (no. 522 of 1867). He completed seven sheets of drawings for the building, and estimated the cost at Rs 5,43,700. See MSA, PWD (1867), vol. 30, no. 208, p. 3 (no. 4184 of 1867). See also ibid., no. 471. Letter of March 2, 1866. These files state the drawings were prepared by October 27, 1866 in London. He returned to Bombay in early December. The government found the building would be too expensive, and so made reductions in certain details to bring the cost down to Rs 4,87,607. See MSA, PWD (1867), vol. 30, no. 208, p. 5 (no. 2974 of 1867).

37. *Indian Engineering*, vol. IV, 1888, pp. 352-53, illustrated.

38. For a fascinating record of the debate and importance style had in the construction of this period (on the project to adapt the Central Press building – 1888–89), see the following 178 pages of discussion between Wilkins and Murzban over this project in MSA, PWD (1868–89), vol. 458, no. 2590 W (part 1). Wilkins assisted Murzban to evolve "an Oriental adaptation of the Italian Gothic ... influenced by the design of the Sailors' Home", though the design was not used.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Barry Bergdoll and Robin Middleton for the assistance and the advice they offered with this article.

ARCHITECTURE AS REINTERPRETATION OF CONTEXT: HOUSING IN KUTCH

Sanjay Udamale

Architecture is generated by various layers – physical as well as cultural. It is an integrated outcome of living and cultural patterns, social structures, history, climate, materials, economy, the technology prevalent at that place, and the aspirations of people. Each layer contributes varyingly, weaving a complex yet united whole. These layers form the character of a context, which is very specific to a place. Architecture, unlike other art forms is inseparable from its locale. Thus any architectural design must respond to place. Hence we have Hawa Mahal – the Palace of Winds in Jaipur, a direct result of climate and the social system; or Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmadabad – a response to the climate, at the same time expressing the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi. This is vivid also in different parts of India, where each region has its own expression of traditional architectural form and language responding sensitively to its climate and culture. In fact it is true in various habitats of the world, from the Machiya houses of Kyoto to the

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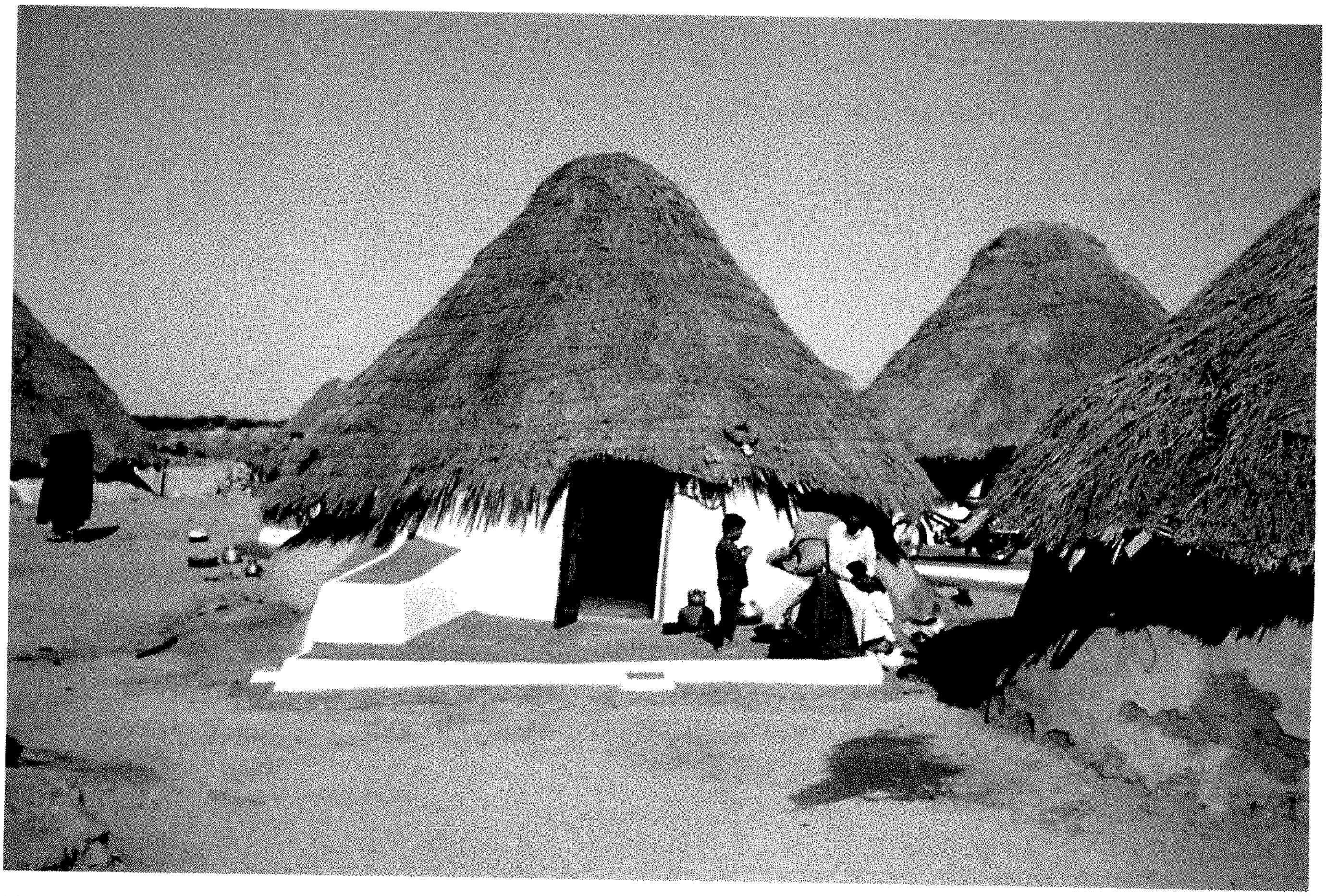


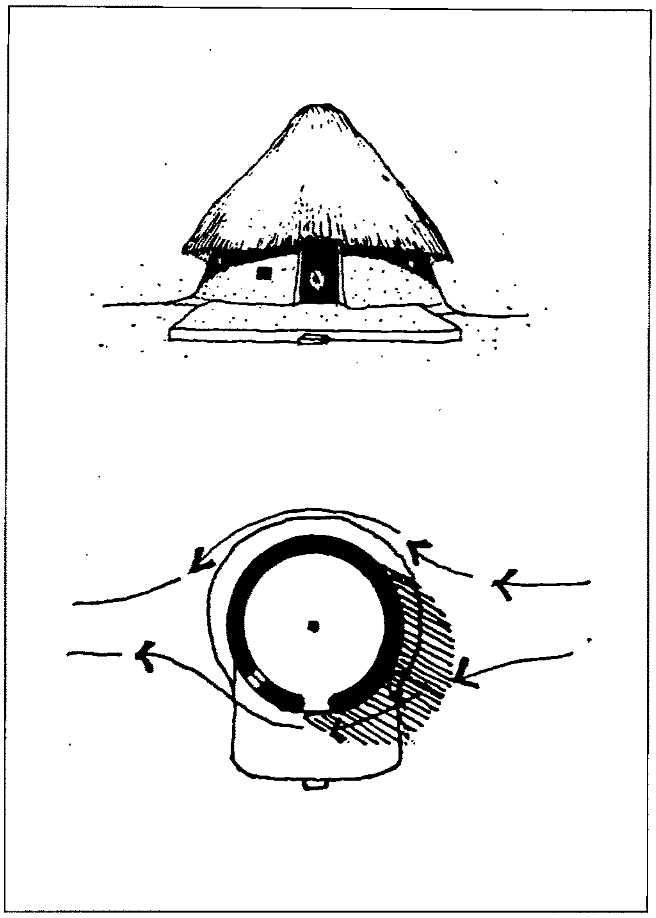
The mud circular house (*bhoonga*) with deep overhang of thatched roof.

hill towns of Yemen to the Georgian houses of Britain.

We tried to address this issue of responding to place and context while designing housing for people of Kutch.[1] This is mainly for families who are settled in cities like Bombay or Ahmadabad and wanted a second home in their native land. Before designing any architectural scheme it was crucial to understand the region – with its enterprising people, hostile geography, colourful history, diverse society, rich traditions, indigenous building skills, and distinctive character of architecture. Kutch has a tradition of incredibly beautiful crafts, which form an essential part of its habitat. Our task was twofold:

1. To evolve architectural form and spatial organization with respect to the climate and culture of the region and present changes in living patterns of the migrated families, to generate a sense of belonging to their original place.
2. To transform and express the various local crafts in the houses to create a familiar ambience. Also to use crafts for new methods of construction, to help preserve them, and create employment for the rural worker locally, thus helping to curb migration to some extent. So from the design stage itself an attempt was made to evolve construction methods based on local skills.

To shape the above objectives an extensive study of the Kutch region from various aspects was necessary. This made it possible to reinterpret and transform the lessons from the study of climate, living patterns, and architecture in the present case of new user; so as not to merely imitate or transfer the pretty imagery – which generally happens, leading to superficial "wrapper" architecture by caricature of cultural images.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The circular form of the *bhoonga* is evolved for smooth movement of air and the deep overhang of thatched roof reduces heat absorption through walls.

LEARNING FROM THE PLACE

Kutch, the second largest district in India, borders Pakistan in the northwestern part of Gujarat. It is a massive thickset peninsula between the great deserts of Sindh and Thar and the Arabian Sea. The desert region lies towards the north and eastern part called *Motu* (Great) and *Nanu* (Little) *Rann*, while the southern coastal area is green. Kutch is not just a desert, but has a mix of variable, rather hostile geography. The climate is unrelentingly hot and dry with a vast diurnal range of temperature, especially in winter (45°C to 2°C). Through the centuries it is believed that various hard-working people – hospitable and tolerant with shrewd business instincts, renowned for their entrepreneurial skills – have settled in this unpropitious land. In the past century or so many people migrated for employment to various parts of the world, including Bombay, and with no permanent employment source for rural youth even today, migration continues. Various communities like the Rabaris, Harijans, Ahirs, Maldharis, etc. stay in the desert area known as Banni (grasslands of the northern Great Rann). They are extremely proficient in various handicrafts, which show the influence of designs from Sindh (e.g. *mutwa/sindhi* embroidery). The terracotta closely resembles Indus Valley pottery and that found at Dholavira – an archaeological site in north Kutch.

In Kutch almost every village specializes in at least one craft in spite of hardships in living, scarce resources, and the stark desert surroundings. Actually these colourful handicrafts are essential and integral objects of daily use for the people, a part of their customs and aesthetic expression, reflecting continuity in their traditions and their communal identity. In all desert societies of the world, the urge to add colour to the environment is observed; but Kutch is very special, for in such a small region a wide spectrum of crafts is seen. All arts and crafts – embroidery, clay decoration, weaving, patchwork, hand-printed textiles, silverwork, woodwork, pottery, stone carving, and wall painting – are transferred from generation to generation as in other traditional artisan communities of India.

Architecture

A built habitat in a tropical region is a composition of open, semi-open, and enclosed spaces interwoven to form the private and public realm. The climate, materials, and cultural patterns of each place shape the habitat and living style. Our study of architecture analysed regional indigenous built form and spatial order – its structure, public and private spaces of the individual houses, to the complete village, extending to the basic form of town and city of the region, and finally the desert settlements of the pastoral communities of Banni.

Bidada village near our project site in coastal Kutch was studied in detail. It resembles a typical Indian town where people of the same community stay together forming major zones of the village. All houses are mainly row-type on both sides of the street. This row-house typology reduces the exposure of external wall surfaces to sun as well as the movement of warm air around the house helping to keep the interiors cool and comfortable. Bidada has winding streets of a unique pattern formed by interconnecting chowks of Y and trident shape of various proportions and scale. The entire village is a mesh of winding streets, which at a larger scale act as channels to carry wind throughout the village, opening out predominantly in the southwest wind direction. Cooled by the shadows of the street walls, the breeze is distinctly felt on every street, creating a microclimate for the village. The curved streets are achieved by staggering every house by a few feet while the visual order and changing heights of houses on either side make the streetscape dynamic and interesting.

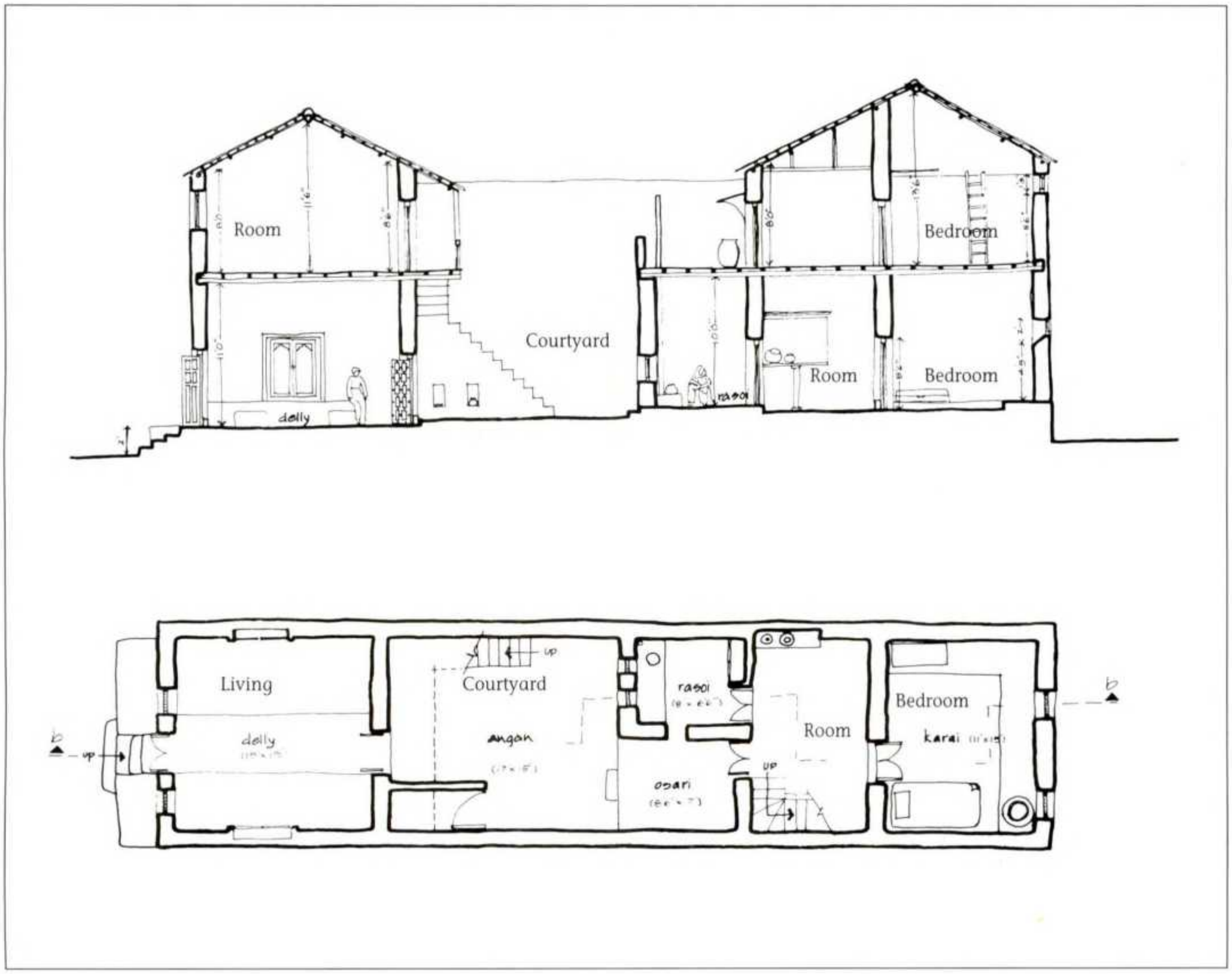
A house in the village consists of living room, kitchen, and bedrooms composed in a particular system of spaces – from the most public to the most private. The number of rooms and area change with the status of the family. A typical row house is entered from the street by small steps with a platform, *otla* at two levels followed by a living room, *osari/baithak.* All the spaces and activities are concentrated around the central court in the following sequence:

Entry steps (*delly*) – public
↓
Living (*osari*) – semi-private
↓
Court and kitchen (*aangan* and *rasoi*) – private
↓
Bedrooms (*karai*) – most private

The court lights and ventilates all the rooms, and it remains in shadow for almost the whole day. All the household activities are done in the courtyard starting from the drying of food articles to the cleaning of utensils to bathing the children to the washing of clothes. According to prevalent social norms here, women's interaction with visitors and non-family members is restricted so the court forms an ideal place for working in privacy.

The analysis of built form and spatial organization of Bidada shows that in the houses and village form, the system of private and public spaces is evolved on the basis of the climate, social set-up, and living pattern. The spatial hierarchy of a house, the community spaces, the streets and bazaar show a transition from the most private to most public spaces. This gives a definite character to the entire village with its own vocabulary of the built environment and expresses a particular lifestyle of the close-knit society.

Now we move to Banni where the pastoral communities lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic life, secluded from villages and towns. Every community has a very distinct identity expressed through their own lifestyle, crafts, and colourful attire. We studied a village of the Rabari community living in a stunningly beautiful habitat called Tunda Vandh. Here the houses are composed of a circular hut (*bhoonga*) on a low platform. A house may have one or more circular units – each for different functions like cooking, sleeping, storage, and fuel. Most activities are carried out on the *otla*, which serves as the open-to-sky living area and is a link between the various circular units. Children play, women sit together to embroider, and elders sit on these



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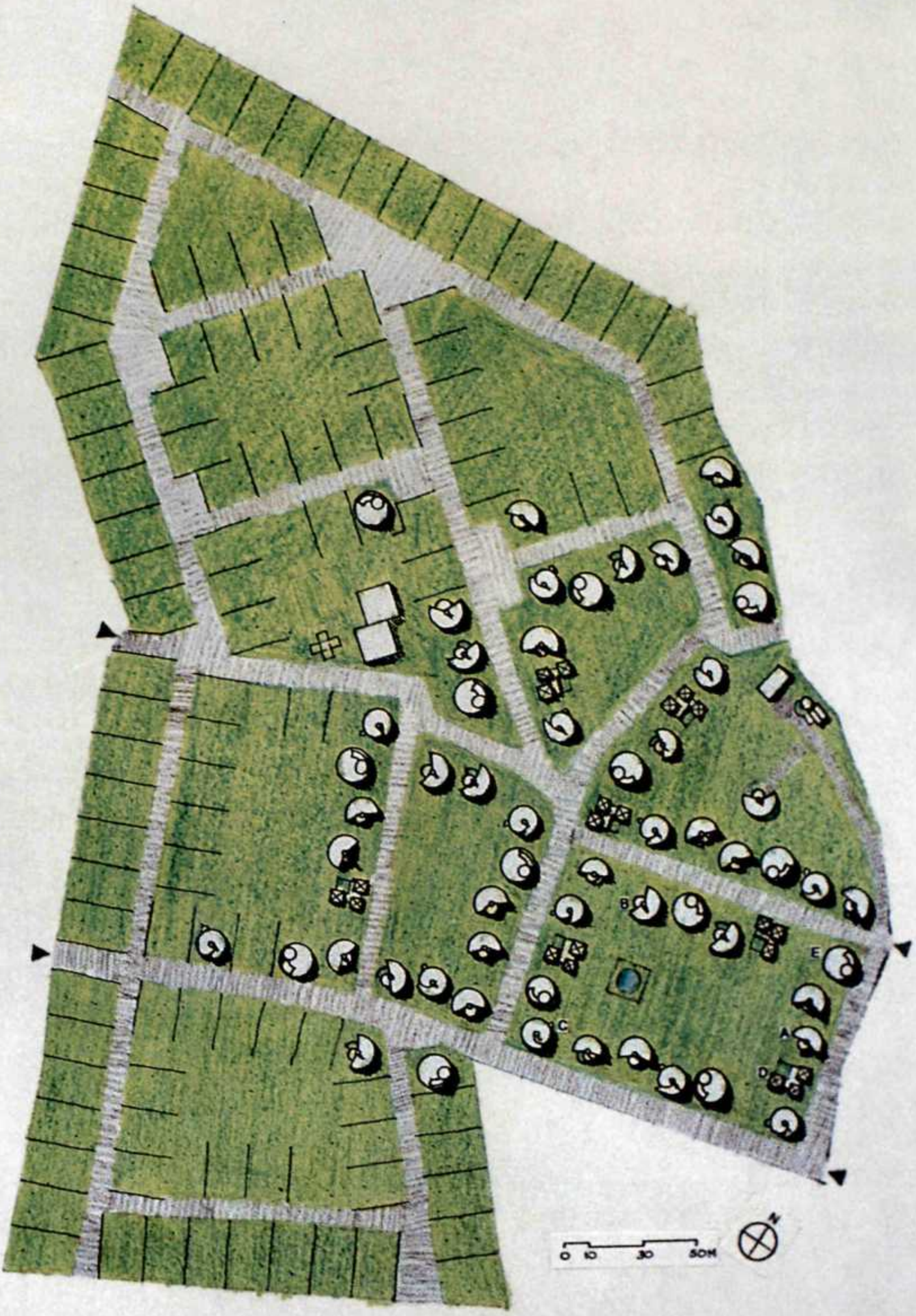
Plan and section of typical row house in a Kutch village showing the sequence of spaces, from most public to most private, i.e. from entry steps to bedrooms.



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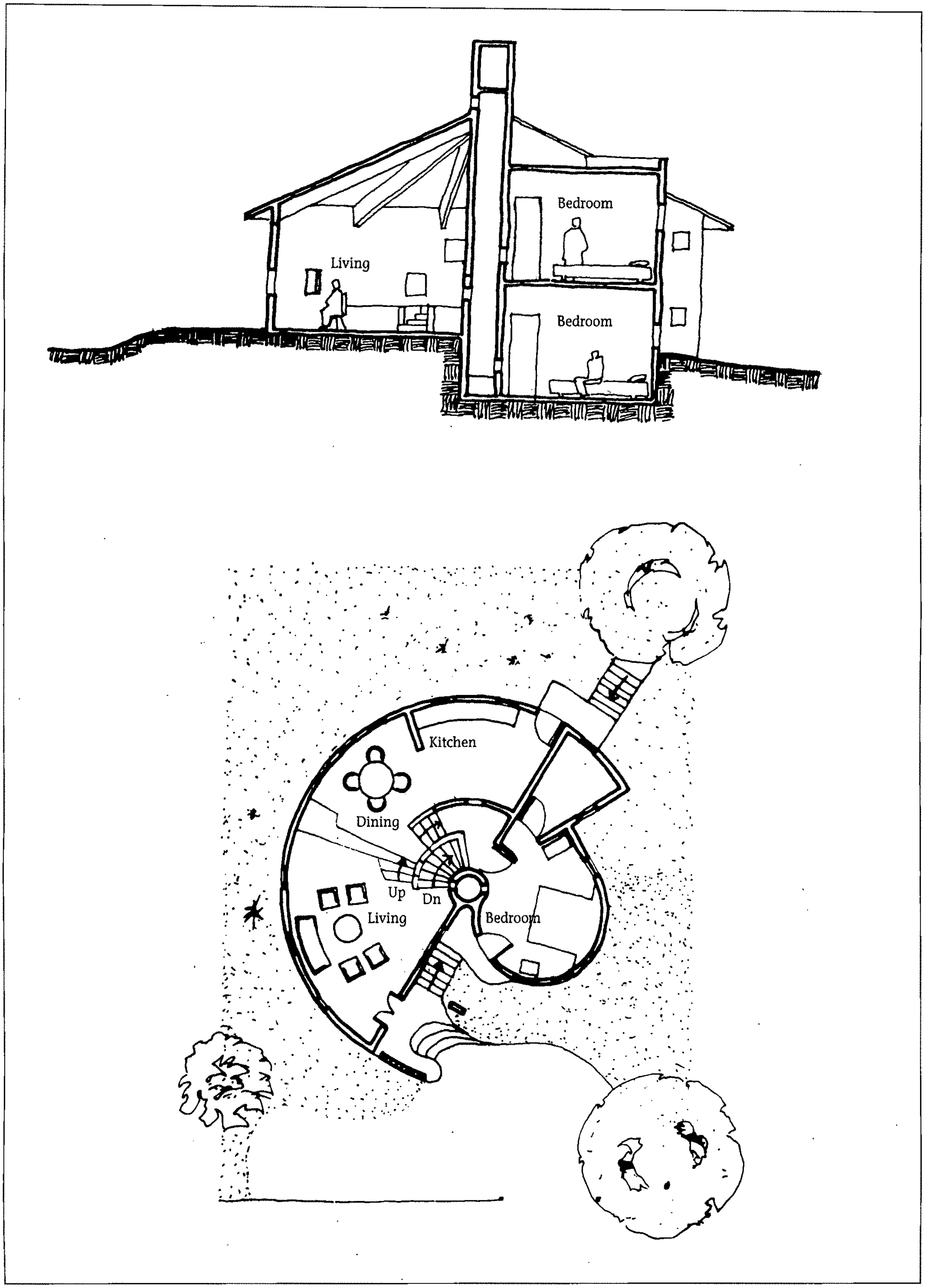
Site plan: The planning is based on clusters formed by a group of individual circular houses sitting on landscaped platforms around a central community green open space, to grow incrementally as a settlement – recalling the polycentric typology of circular mud houses of Banni. This is to facilitate cross-ventilation for each unit as well as the entire cluster. Every house is oriented to catch maximum southwest breeze and cross-ventilation.


Bedroom
Living
Bedroom
Kitchen
Dining
Up
Dn
Living
Bedroom

5

House type B: Plan and section.

platforms which face the street acting as a community interaction space. The platforms and street space serve as a courtyard for daily activities. As the family's requirement increases, an additional unit is constructed by extending the platform – an impressive system of flexible expansion, to become a cluster and ultimately form a settlement (*vandh*). This polycentric typology of separate units is evolved to cross-ventilate all houses as well as the entire cluster. The clustering and the open spaces reflect their lifestyle and the social structure of the community.

Inside circular houses are mud storage containers (*kothars*) for grain and milk products, decorated with *limpankaam* reliefwork, studded with mirrors. The small shining mirrors create a charming effect of reflecting light in the poorly illuminated interior creating a characteristic ambience. The circular room is spotlessly clean and orderly. The thick wall with few openings and tight thatched conical roof provides insulation against the extremes of climate. The roof covers almost two-thirds of the wall area by its overhang – so the heat reception by walls is very low. The house is like a cone, an outcome of extreme climatic conditions, to take care of hot air movement and the chilling winds of winter. The house being circular, the warm air smoothly circulates away from the house and theoretically only one point of the circle receives the maximum sun while half the wall surface area is always under shade reducing heat absorption. The *bhoonga* is a perfect combination of geometry and local materials in the given climatic conditions. The cumulative traditional knowledge of every successive generation results in such intelligent built forms.

It is amazing to see in Kutch the adaptation and flexibility of the people both in desert and non-desert (coastal and plains) areas. The Bidada row houses and Banni circular house settlements are excellent examples of two architectural typologies in response to various social patterns

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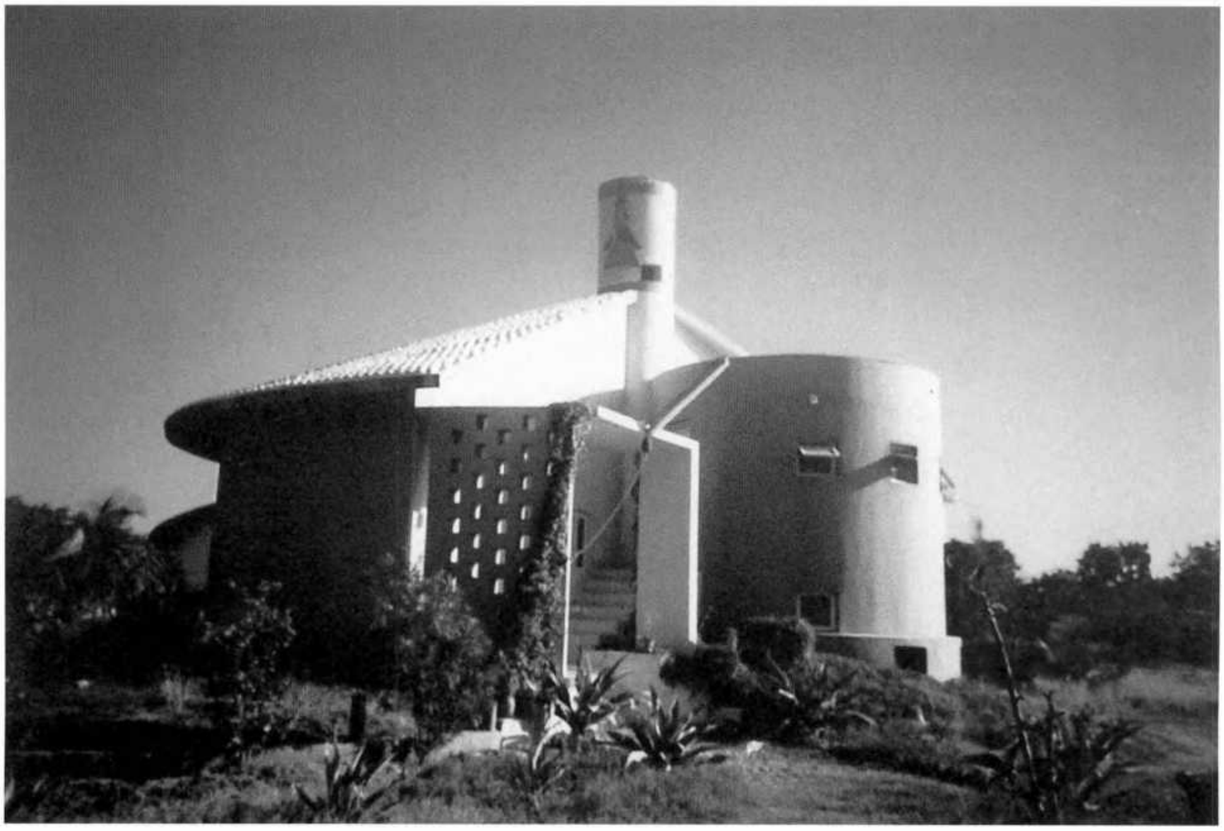
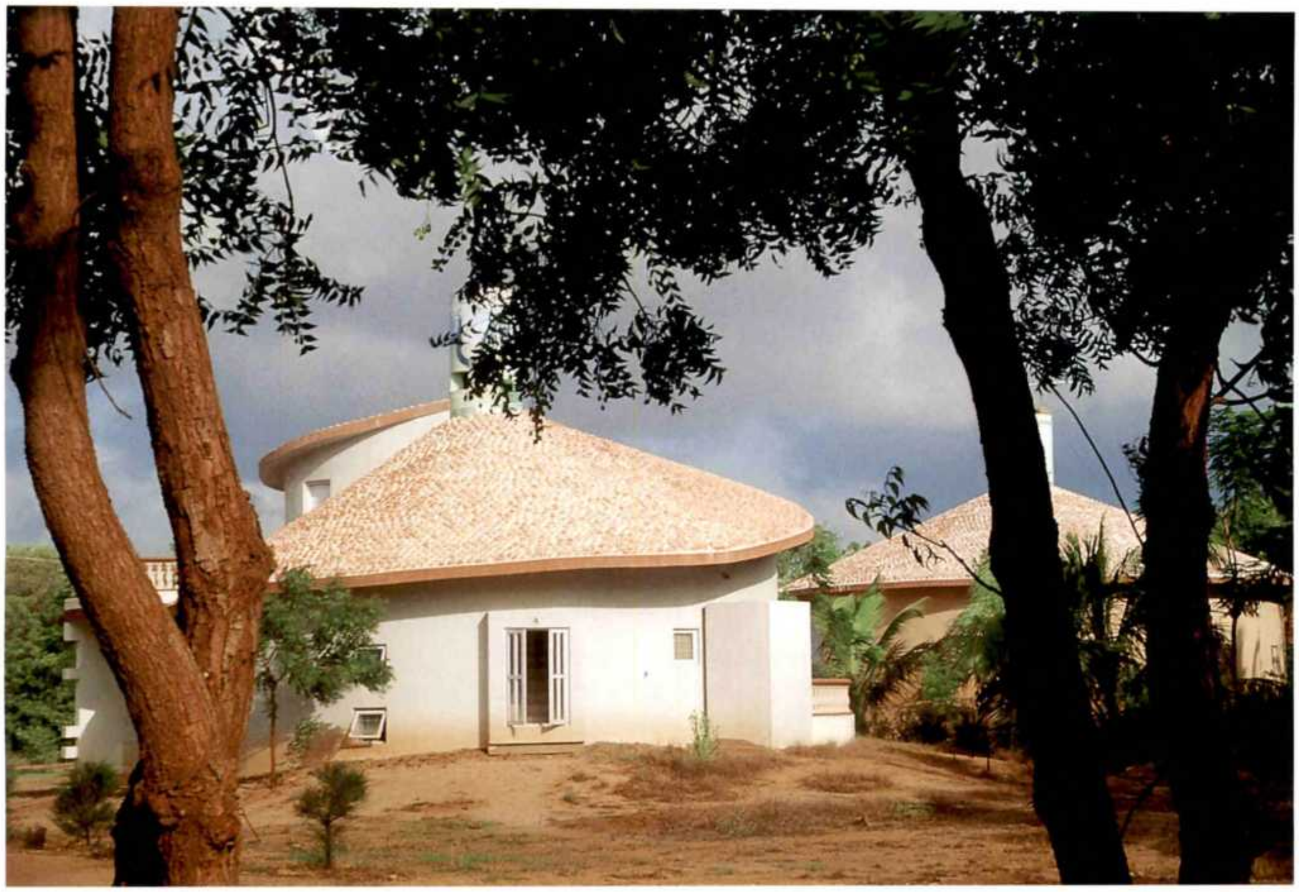


House type B: Spaces interlocked around the central ventilation shaft.



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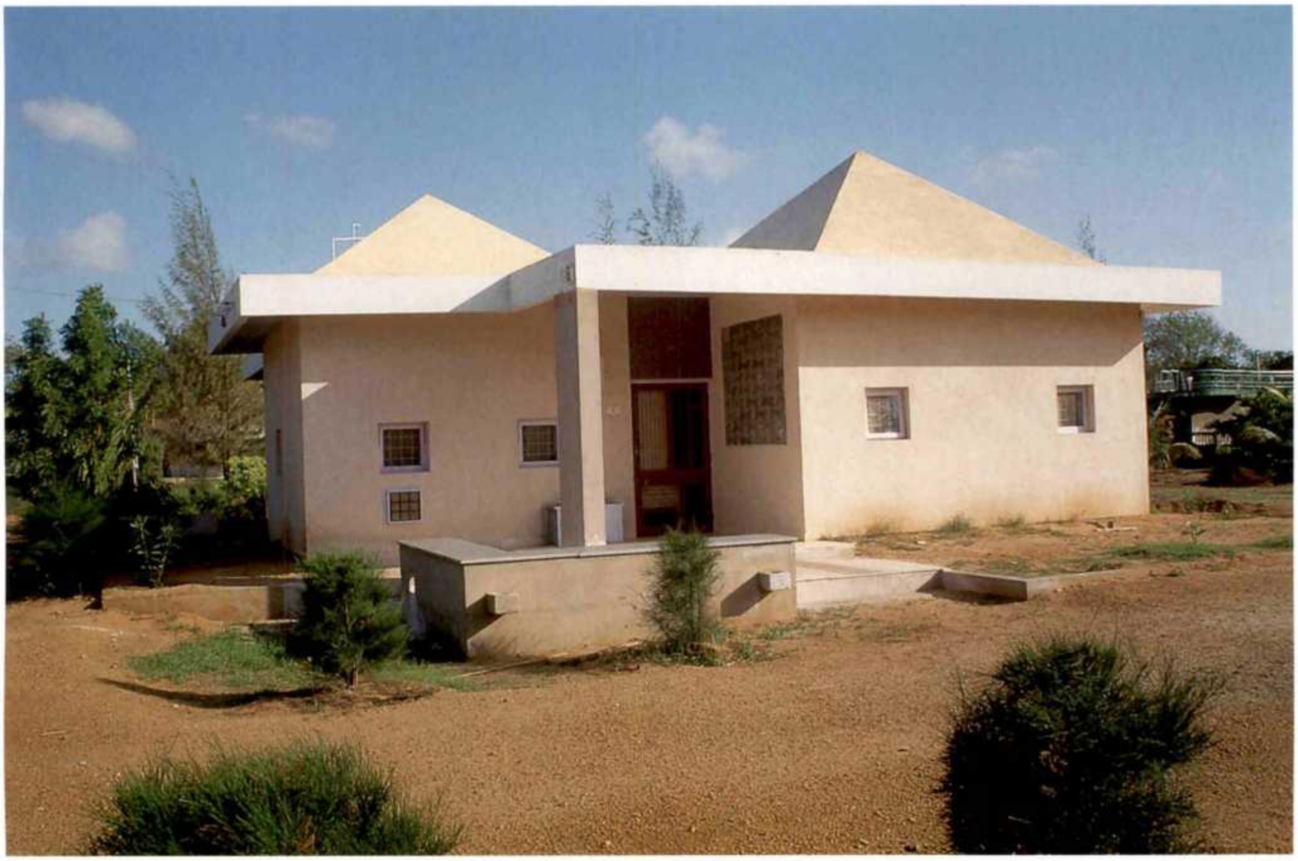
House type C: Circular form and the central ventilation shaft ensure smooth circulation of air.



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House type D: The rooms of the house sit on a common landscaped platform similar to the *bhoongas* in Banni.

and resources but dissimilar geographical conditions.

SITE PLANNING

The housing site was farmland outside Bidada in south Kutch near Mandvi. On studying the village layout, its built form, and site surroundings – which were in harmonious balance, the design continued to preserve what existed. It transformed the farm to a garden in which the new circular houses would merge with the surroundings and would suit the hot and dry climate.

The layout is a group of clusters and each cluster was designed with individual houses on landscaped platforms around a central open community green space. These clusters incrementally form a small settlement recalling the composition of circular houses around a community space as observed in Banni. This polycentric typology has the crucial advantage of cross-ventilating every house and the entire cluster. Houses were designed with no boundary walls, to give the feeling of being in the midst of a garden. They face the street in the front and at the rear share the community space. Being circular, they were placed in several different ways, their profile along the street varying so that the central ventilation shaft could take advantage of the direction of the prevailing breezes.

LIVING PATTERN AND DESIGN OF HOUSES

The house forms were circular or semicircular in plan wherein the internal spaces were arranged around a central ventilation shaft and covered by a conical RCC roof. They were evolved through a climatic analysis of the *bhoongas* of the Rabari community.

There are five types of houses (types B, C, D, and E illustrated here). Each has an area of 120–150 sq. m comprising an entrance veranda, living room, kitchen, and bedrooms with toilets. The sequence of spaces as observed in traditional houses of Kutch (similar to those in Bidada) – from public to most private – was transformed

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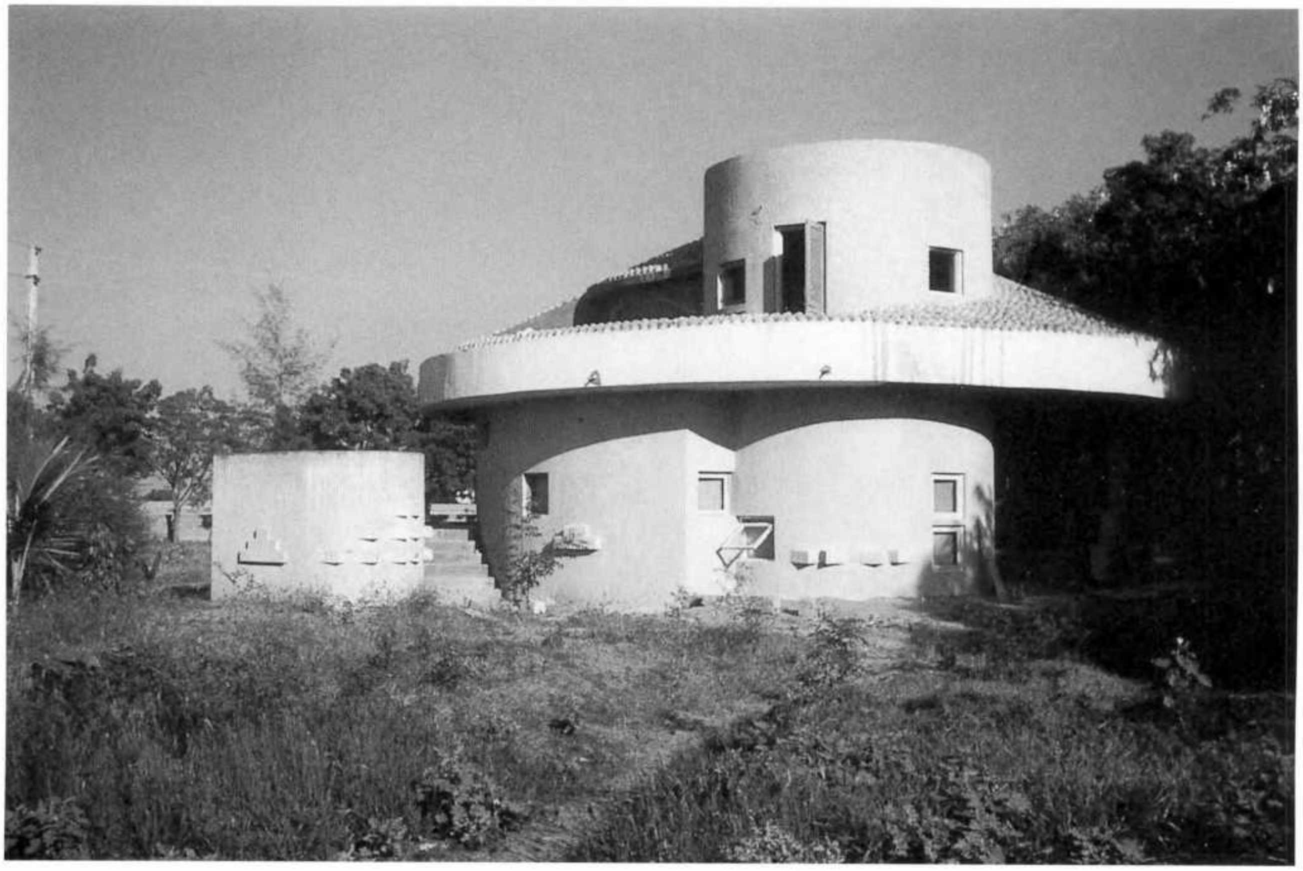

House type E: Note the deep overhang as in the circular houses of Tunda.

here since the new inhabitants from cities preferred more coherent living spaces. Hence on entering the house through the *delly* – the living, dining, and kitchen area is a continuous open space carried forward to the surrounding landscaped garden. This sequence culminates in two bedrooms interlocking at two levels around the central shaft. The private domain (bedrooms) is at lower, upper, or partly raised level avoiding direct view or reach of visitors. The surrounding earth is raised as a garden upto plinth level and at times above the lower level of the bedroom to achieve cool interiors and also the smooth flow of space from outside to inside.

The principal spaces of a house were arranged around the central ventilation shaft, which emerges out of the conical roof. The cylindrical shaft works on the Venturi principle: the wind blowing at higher speed at the top causes a pressure difference thereby ventilating the house. The house breathes through the small openings in the external wall and this shaft. The structure being circular reduces heat absorption. The conical roof above circular walls allows for more air circulation as compared to a flat roof. Thus the circular unit alters the microclimate of the total house making the living spaces comfortable.

One of the circular houses has a deep overhang, which provides protection from the sun for most external wall surfaces of the house, as observed in Tunda houses. In another house the rooms were square in plan with pyramidal roofs sitting together on a platform as plinth, recalling *bhoongas*.

CRAFTS TO CONSTRUCTION

Kutch has a rich tradition of handicrafts and in spite of the insurgence of modern machine-made objects they continue to form an essential part of their colourful habitat. To create a familiar ambience these crafts were transformed in architecture through new construction methods. This implied evolving new building methods within the limitations of local skills, for which many experiments were undertaken. They were first carried out in the site office-cum-residence of the architects and were continued in the new houses, integrating them with living spaces. The traditional skills of the region immensely helped the transformation of crafts into new building methods. This building activity in the village provided work for construction labour, carpenters, local artisans, gardeners, and the few educated youth.

Impression concrete blocks

Good soil for making bricks is unavailable in Kutch, so cement concrete blocks were used as a major building material. For this project a small private enterprise of concrete block making was started at the site. Sketches made during travels through Kutch helped to understand the daily life of the people. These images were graphically represented and used for casting impressions on concrete blocks, reminiscent of the *limpan* work of Banni houses. Six-mm-deep impressions were achieved by embossing patterns made by wooden and metal plates onto the concrete blocks. These blocks were used in the form of a collective panel on a wall or as a mural. In the circular walls straight concrete blocks were slightly staggered to create niches and small openings for ventilation. These created interesting patterns of light and shadow on the external side of the circular wall.

Pottery for insulation

Pottery is a developed craft of Kutch. The clay bowls made by potters were used for roof insulation since they trap air inside them and also reduce the area under direct heat by casting shadows on the roof. The roof being a cone, the incident sun never covers the entire surface except when overhead, reducing heat intake. About nine thousand bowls were required for each house thereby generating considerable work for the potter. The clay bowls were also used in the ceiling by laying them inverted below the slab

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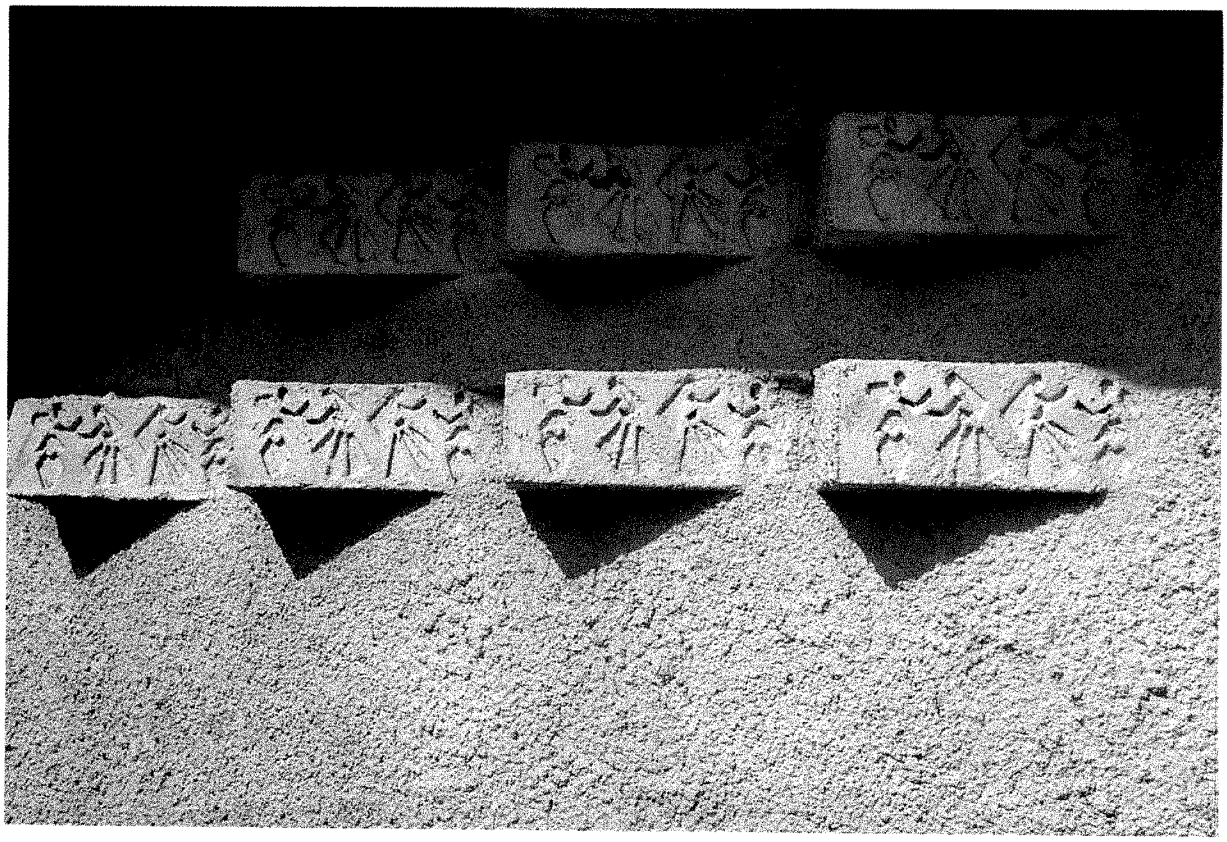

Reinterpreting the clay decoration of mud houses: concrete impression blocks are used on external and internal sides to create a panel or mural or a patterned composition as well as staggered in the wall to form ventilation conduits and small niches.

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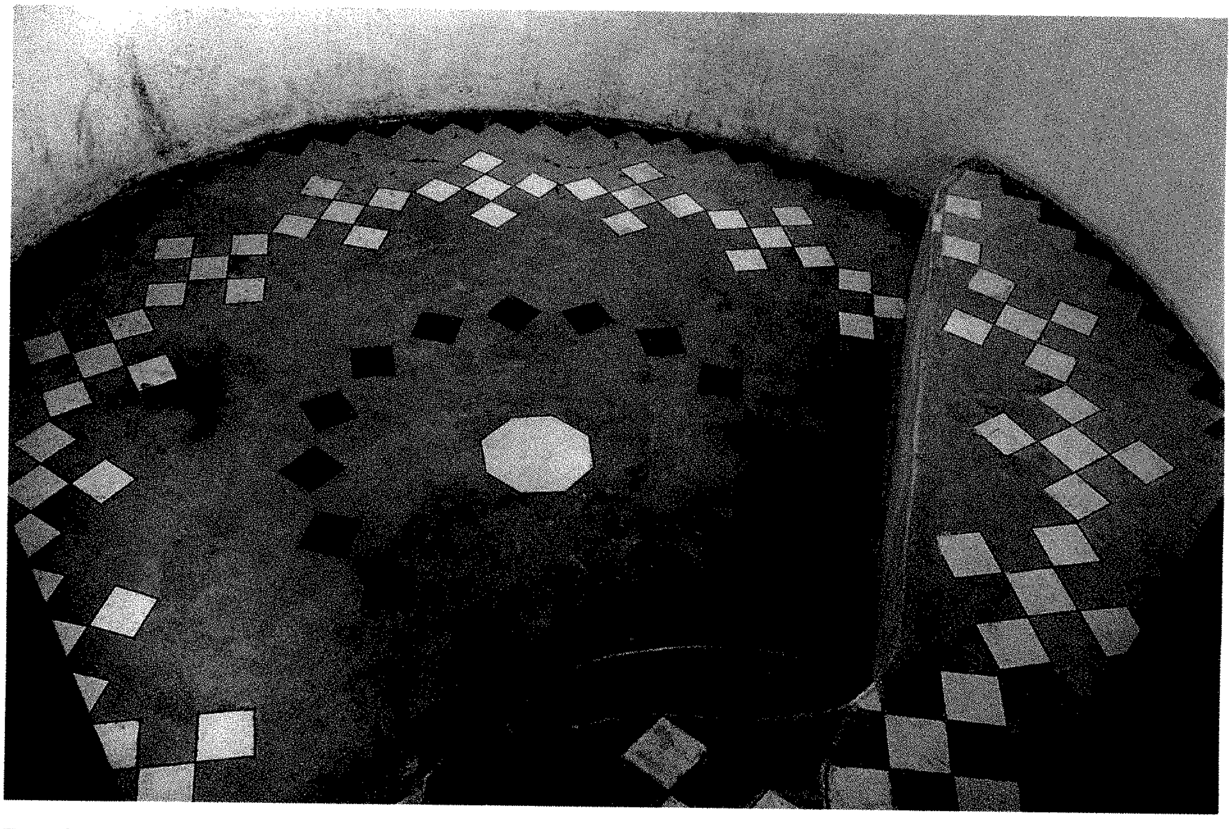


Transforming embroidery design to flooring pattern.

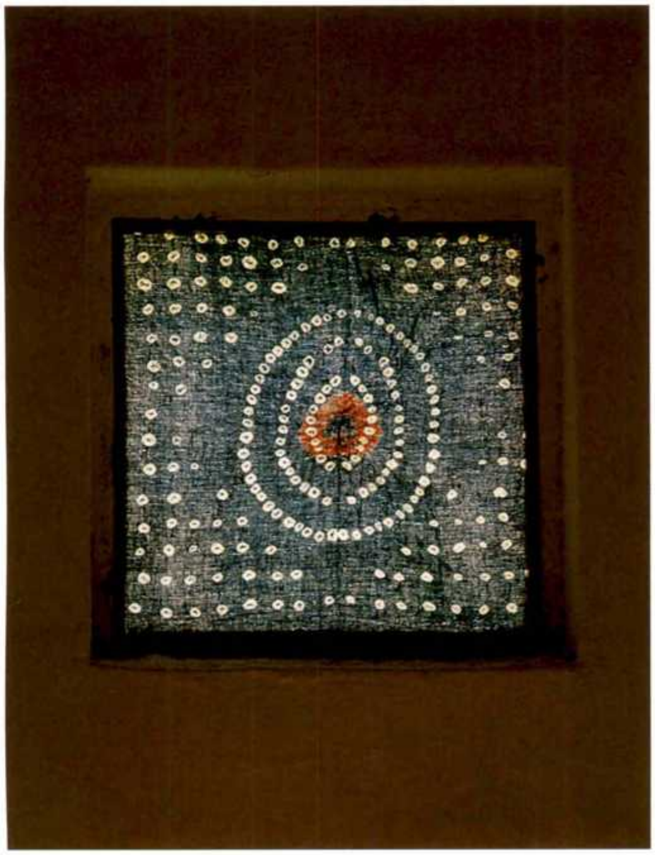
giving it an aesthetic texture – a few bowls were used as electrical fixtures for lighting. Convex clay plates called *tavdis,* which are used for making rotis, were used in different patterns on some external walls for insulation. The triangular spaces between the circular plates were studded with small mirrors for the reflection of heat.

Embroidery and flooring

Kutch is renowned for the exquisite embroideries of its different communities. The embroidery was transformed into geometrical flooring patterns, e.g. in the bedroom the marble mosaic floor with its repetition of five squares as in Kutchi-style embroidery, forming an elegant marginal border for the room.

Textiles and fibreglass panels

Bandhani, the colourful soft cotton tie-and-dye textile craft is a bold visual image of Kutch. This *bandhani* sandwiched between fibreglass sheets was used as panels for window openings. This avoids the direct glare and fills the space with colour, similar to stained glass. It makes the interiors interesting – translating the local textile craft into architecture. In batik printing, designs carved on wooden blocks are imprinted on cloth by the process of waxing and dyeing. These blocks after some years lose their sharpness and become unusable. They were used to embellish the main door and window frames of the houses and on table surfaces and other furniture.



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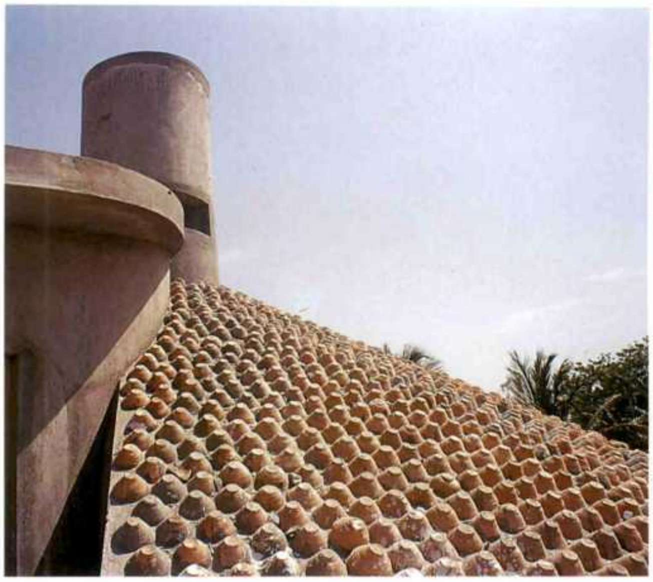
Bandhani textile between glass sheets for window panels.



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Clay bowls used for roof pattern.

This housing evolved in response to the climate, crafts, and cultural context of Kutch, and changes in the living patterns of the people. The architectural design through form, space, and detail attempts to create a sense of belonging, so vital for the inhabitants.

NOTE

1. The Indian Institute of Architects awarded this housing project the ninth annual JIIA award in 1997 for residential architecture. I would like to thank Architect and Professor Anand Pandit for initiating this project in 1993 with a unique approach of teaching and giving us architects (Amol Mahajan, Gauri Sahasrabuddhe, Smita Thomre, Minakshi Pahurkar, and myself) the opportunity to learn by the study of a place and its people, to design and construct as a response to context, and to execute the project.

THE LOOTING OF ANTIQUITIES

Dilip K. Chakrabarti

Many years ago, while standing on a heap of collapsed stone blocks of an old temple in Purulia at the western fringe of West Bengal, I had a view of its undisturbed *garbhagriha* below. I have not yet forgotten what I saw: a Tirthankara image buried up to its knees because of the rising surface level since the ninth century, but otherwise standing upright in its original position and looking rather forlorn. The devotees have stopped coming; the villages which used to send them have disappeared without a trace, and the temple has collapsed, but the stone deity is still in place, looking the way it did a thousand-odd years ago. I have no feeling for the ranks of statues in a museum; but in the countryside they bring to me the warmth of a bygone age. When the midday wind rustles the leaves of the trees below which they lie, and when the cowherds sit around in the shade near them, and when, after a dip in the local pond, old women bring them water and some leaves and flowers, they somehow do not appear remote; they acquire a live quality, becoming a part of our countryside and of our selves.

1

Antiquity collection at the grassroots level: a villager with his collection of pots and beads.

To tear them out of their context and place them in rows in museums is bad enough. To steal them and make money out of them is, of course, treading the path of organized crime.

2

The restitution of cultural property and trade in illegally acquired archaeological objects are both seriously discussed in modern archaeological literature. Only the governments of nation states can take formal positions on the first issue, and as far as I know, there is no Government of India policy document in this matter. There is no reason to believe that the bureaucrats of Shastri Bhavan, the National Museum, or the Archaeological Survey have given any thought to the matter. The issue also remains undebated in Indian art and archaeology circles. The issue of illegal traffic in antiquities which, in the Indian context, generally means art objects, has been taken more seriously by our authorities. A regulatory mechanism with a set of well-defined rules in the background has long been in place, and if one's information is correct, there is a special section of the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation to deal specifically with this problem. I shall later try to examine the extent to which the Government of India's policy in this regard has been successful, but it would be relevant to look into its international dimension first.

3

A secure current baseline for a global approach to the issue is *Culture without Context*, a half-yearly newsletter of the Illegal Antiquities Research Centre of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at Cambridge. It documents and discusses the relevant global material, besides drawing attention to many publications, resolutions, and conferences within its frame of reference. Between October 22 and 25, 1999, it also held, jointly with the J. Paul Getty Museum of Los Angeles, an international conference on "Illicit Antiquities: The Destruction of the World's Archaeological Heritage".

The scale and endemicness of this destruction, which the papers read in this conference brought out are, in fact, quite shocking. Not many parts of the world – not even the well-looked-after Mediterranean lands – are apparently immune. Many Classical objects on display in the Western world – Cycladic figures or Apeulian vases – do not have any context. In the less developed parts of the world, it is plain looting and destruction of archaeological sites, aided in all cases by population pressure, inadequate laws, and greed for easy money on the part of both ordinary people unaware of the need for preserving heritage, and corrupt officials. Occasionally it can be something more than that. For instance, in 1993 looters used rocket-launchers and hand grenades to attack the Angkor Conservation Compound in Cambodia. Antiquities are also looted to finance civil unrest, as in Mexico and Somalia. In China the local authorities are known to have helped the looters.

4

The Indian situation was summed up in this conference by a paper sent by Ajai Shanker, the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, although he himself did not attend the conference [he has since passed away]. His paper, "Threat to cultural sites in India from illegal excavations etc.: case study – problems and solutions", began by giving three examples of the looting of archaeological sites by illegal excavations. He mentioned the theft of the Gupta-period carved bricks and inscribed *Ramayana* panels from Katinga in Etah (UP) and the illegal excavations conducted by villagers to acquire antiquities of the early historic period at the Centrally protected sites of Bilsar (Etah) and Chandraketugarh (Twenty-four Parganas, West Bengal). In the second section of his paper he outlined the salient features of the Antiquities and

Art Treasures Act of 1972, as an indication of the Government of India's concern to stop illegal traffic in antiquities. He also said that it was a matter of global concern and that the relevant international bodies such as UNESCO should be more involved in laying down specific preventive and regulatory measures. The third and final part of his paper dealt with successful cases of retrieval of Indian antiquities from abroad, both as a result of court cases and through bilateral negotiations. Ten specific cases were cited including the Sivapuram Nataraja (restitution to India under an agreement in the wake of prolonged litigation in the UK and USA), Tamluk Yakshi (out-of-court settlement), Tiruvilakkudi Nataraja (out-of-court settlement), Nalanda stucco (out-of-court settlement), Amin pillars (victory in court?), Pathur Nataraja (victory in court), Bodhgaya Buddha (out-of-court settlement), and Krishnajanma sculpture of the Dhubela Museum, Chhatarpur, MP (out-of-court settlement).

5

As an ordinary Indian academic, miles away from any corridor of power, I would not put the entire blame of looting India's antiquities at the door of the unlicensed/licensed antiquity dealers and the general public unmindful of the country's heritage. I would put the blame partly at the door of India's policy-makers too. It is well-known that antiquities have acquired their market-value because of international demand, but it is unlikely that the bottom will ever drop out of this market and that the looting of antiquities will some day cease to be commercially viable. We should accept the unfortunate fact that the international market for antiquities will continue to operate, and the sooner we make our own laws more transparent, more realistic, and more enforceable, the better. We have to assume that there will always be people interested more in money than in their national heritage, and our aim should be to stamp out the element of profit as much as possible. Whining at international conferences will not protect one's national heritage.

In South Asia as a whole, the looting of antiquities is still not on the scale on which it is pursued in some other parts of the world. It is only in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan that there may be gun-toting men to drive away inquisitive archaeologists, but let us remember that even there it was possible for the government to recover a Kushana-period gold necklace weighing 27 kg. In the rest of the subcontinent, I can think of only two cases where armed robbers looted government museums. One of these was in India when the Bodhgaya museum was looted; in the second case, the government museum of Mainamati in Bangladesh was robbed of its old bronzes.

Coveted South Asian items in the international market comprise mostly objects of art in various forms. There is no market for normal archaeological objects such as pottery, lithic or metal tools, etc. I know of no case where the artefacts of the Indus civilization and the Neolithic-Chalcolithic cultures have been deliberately looted and smuggled out.

6

The hub of the regulatory framework in India is The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972, with various ordinances and notifications associated with it. This act is fairly draconian in the sense that it virtually makes the possession of an antiquity by a god-fearing Indian a criminal offence. The onus of registering everything with the government and that too in triplicate, with three copies of photographs and within a very short time-frame lies entirely with the individual. In a country with limited literacy the effectiveness of such a piece of legislation can easily be imagined.

A detailed analysis of this Act is out of place here. All I would say is that people should be given some chance to feel clean in the eyes of the

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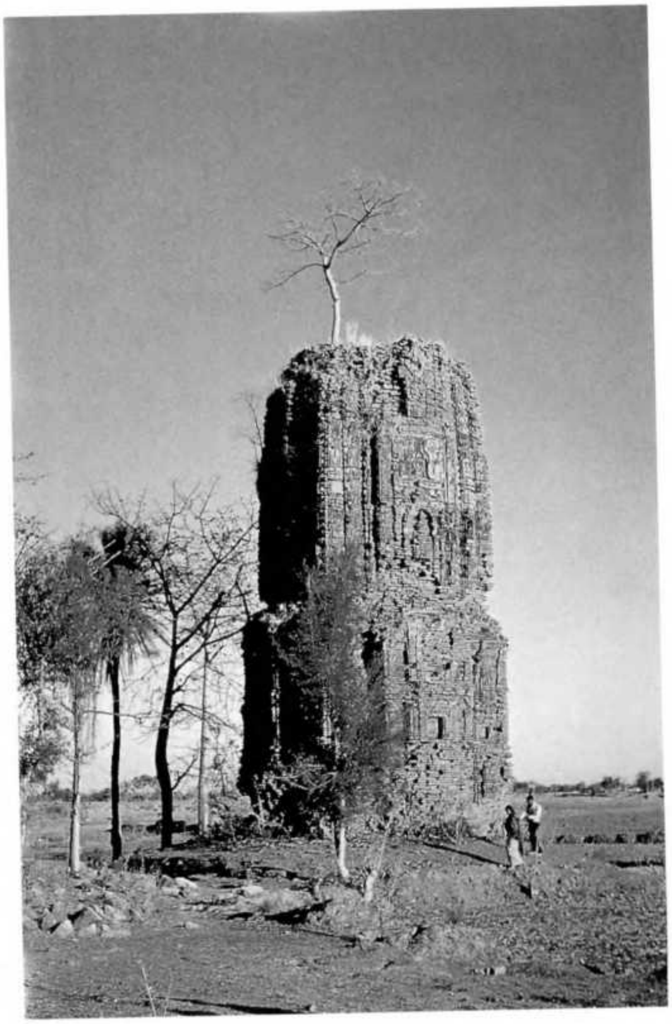
This small limestone bull of the Mauryan period was photographed in a village collection at Harinarayanpur near Diamond Harbour, West Bengal. The Hooghly river has been cutting into the site for more than thirty years and the site is now more or less completely destroyed. Meanwhile, thousands of terracottas and other objects have been collected by the villagers from the loose and eroding river cliff and thrown to the winds.

law. It is the illiterate and poor peasants ploughing their land, who make the most of the antiquity finds in India (figures 1 and 2). You do not expect them to forego labour and spend money on a trip to the nearest large city to hand over, without any remuneration, what they have found to a government officer. I cannot think of a single reason why they should not hand it over to a wandering agent of the area's antiquity dealers and earn a little money. Let me draw on memory to tell you how the system operates – or used to operate – at the grassroots level. A *panwala* of Allahabad told me that he had a small sum invested as "advance" among ordinary people in the countryside. If those people found anything while ploughing their land, they would take that, on their next trip to town, to my *panwala*. A small sum would change hands, and perhaps an umbrella or a school textbook would be bought with it. If the government makes at least a gesture of paying for such antiquities, and if the concerned archaeological officers make regular trips to the village level, most of the people would be willing to hand over antiquities to the government, rather than to the agents of commercial dealers. The source of antiquity supply to the dealers would at least begin to partly dry out.

In his paper the DGA referred to illegal diggings at certain sites. One of these sites has long been known to me. Chandraketugarh is about an hour's bus journey from north Calcutta and one of the richest early historical city sites of the country. It has been known since the early twentieth century; desultory excavations without any detailed report took place in the mid 1950s and '60s. Meanwhile, breathtakingly lovely terracottas and ivories have been discovered by villagers ploughing their lands here for the last



3

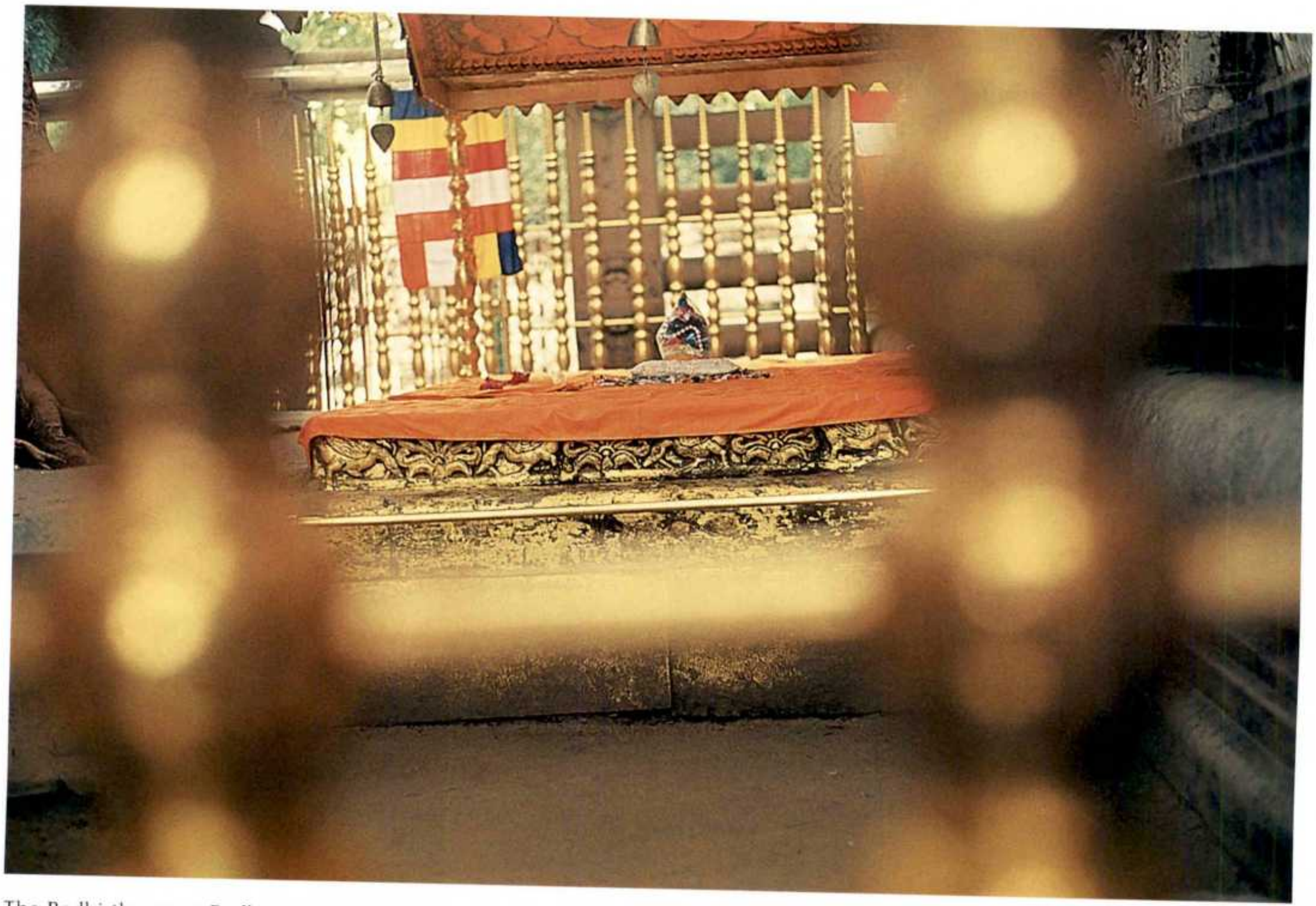
An eleventh-century Pala period brick temple at Boram in Purulia, West Bengal. The site has been known since the nineteenth century but is not on anybody's preservation list.

forty years. If the director-generals for the last forty years or even the local officers had bothered about this site, it would have been properly investigated and the DGA would not have found it necessary to mention it at an international conference on the looting of antiquities. You cannot let sites remain shoddily investigated and at the same time feel distressed about their looting. With a better awareness of the monetary value of antiquities in the countryside, cases of fraudulent excavations will no doubt increase in future, and a liberal policy in allowing "rescue-archaeology" by non-governmental organizations will be necessary to stop this menace. However, the concept of "rescue-archaeology" by private organizations is unknown and still unacceptable in India.

The Indian villagers with their simple religiosity consider any stone image a deity and thus worthy of protection and care. It is a different proposition altogether with the elite. In South Asia, they are not known for their concern with the country's heritage. Archaeology hardly figures in the scheme of Indian historical education. Here I recollect the case of the Department of History of Delhi University which keeps its collection of more than three hundred Mughal, Rajasthani, and Pahari miniature paintings in steel cupboards in a room where the summer temperature frequently exceeds 50°C. The problem is not of money but that of attitude. There has been no lack of czars and czarinas in post-Independence India in the realm of culture. What has been largely missing is educated commitment and professionalism.

Eventually we would do much better if we could involve panchayat and district board-level leadership in keeping an eye on the antiquities and monuments of their respective areas (figure

4



The Bodhi throne at Bodhgaya, one of the few surviving pieces of Mauryan workmanship of the third century BCE, has been given a coat of gold. Note the gilt geese and honeysuckle below the level of the cloth. Has the Central government which has an ASI office at Bodhgaya taken notice?

3). The example of Madhya Pradesh which has set up district-level archaeology committees may be worth emulating in this regard. The system of history education in the country should change too and inculcate some curiosity in the history of our land. Thirdly, it should be possible for any Indian to build a collection of his/her own and *publish* it without incurring anybody's wrath. There should also be a far more liberal policy of export for the general run of antiquities, but for outstanding pieces there should be exemplary vigilance. Vandalizing monuments and objects of art should be speedily detected and punishable. For instance, those responsible for putting a coat of gold on the third century BCE Bodhi throne at Bodhgaya (figure 4) and on the Kushana-period Parinirvana Buddha at Kushinagara must be brought to book.

Finally, there must be a governmental system of monitoring the international market in our antiquities.

Even in the existing state of affairs, international art dealers and private collectors have a responsibility. At the international end they operate in a legal market. The least they can do for the countries which are being looted is to publish, or allow other people to publish, what they have acquired.

NEWSLETTER FROM DELHI

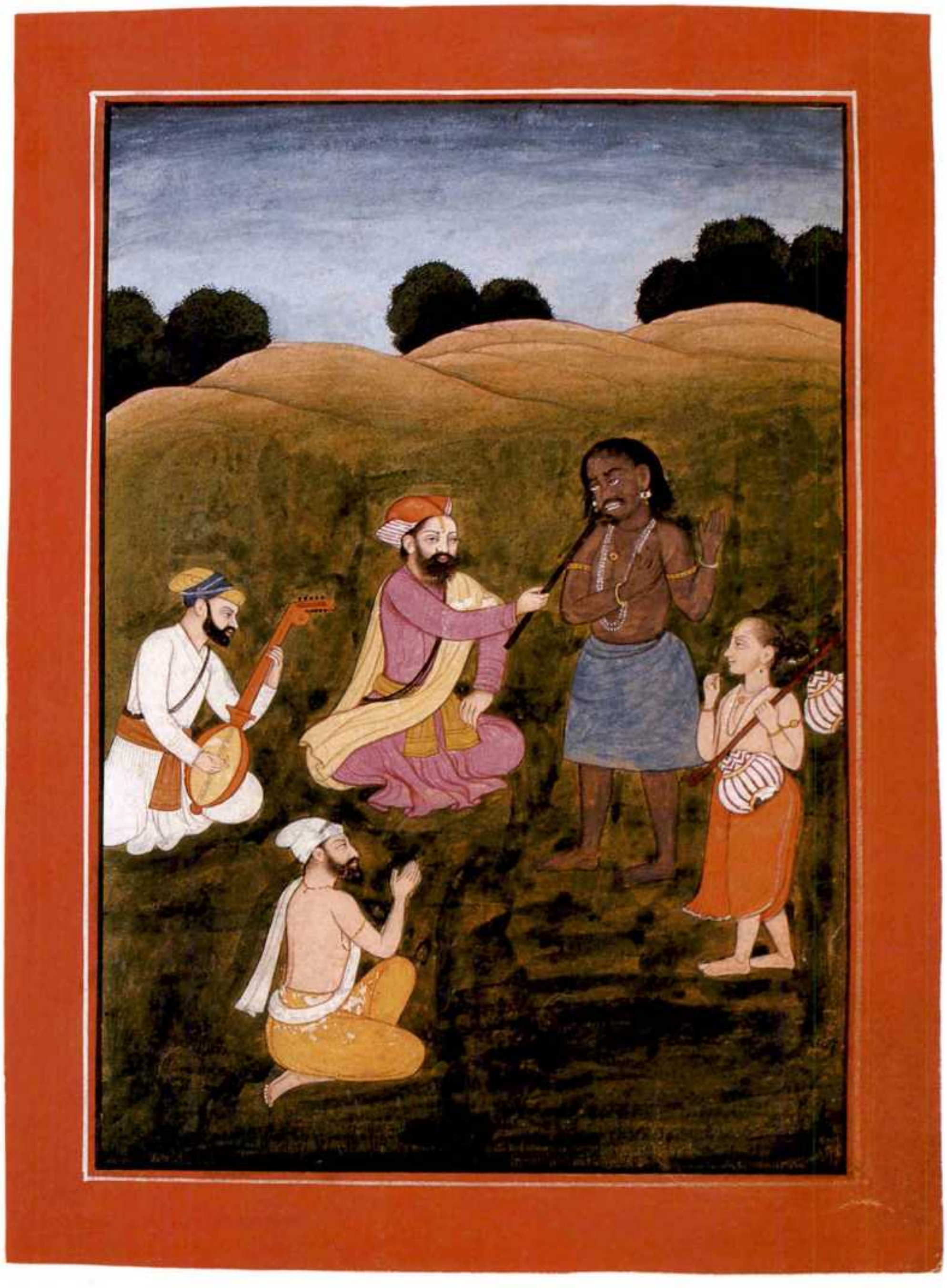
Kavita Singh

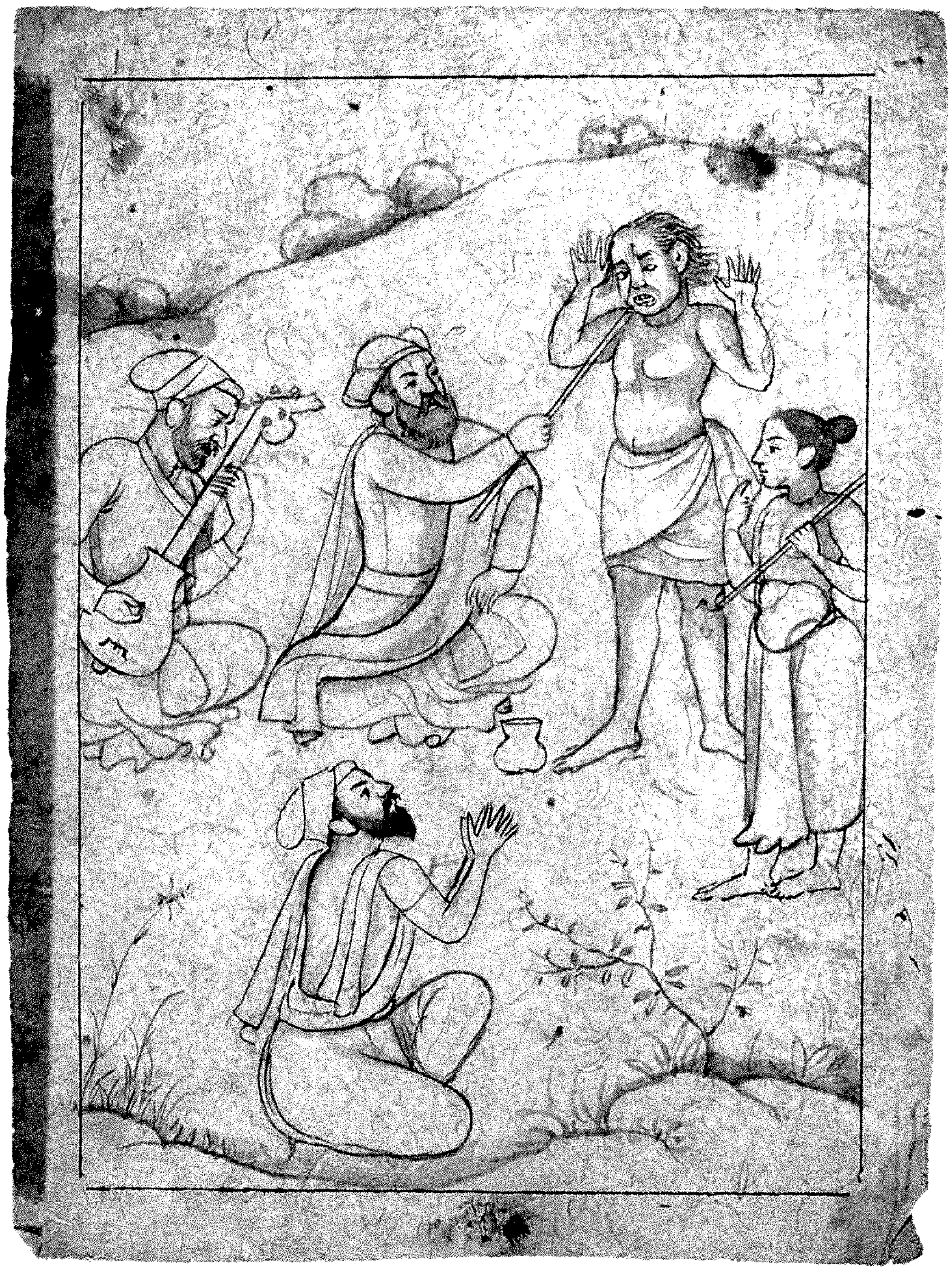
A sumptuous exhibition of Sikh art opened at the National Museum, New Delhi on March 14. Titled "Piety and Splendour: Sikh Heritage in Art" the exhibition closes the year-long celebrations of the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. Three hundred years ago Guru Gobind Singh baptized five of his followers. He gave them a common surname voiding caste differences, established a round of daily prayers, and enjoined upon them the five "k's" – *kara* or steel bangle, *kachha* or drawers, *kirpan* or dagger, *kangha* or comb, *kesha* or unshorn hair – that mark the distinct identity of the community of Sikhs.

However singular the appearance of the Sikh community may be, within the world of art "Sikh art" has always been thought of as a pastiche. Earlier studies have looked chiefly at objects made for the nineteenth-century court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore. Here, most paintings were made by artists from Pahari schools. In the decorative arts the refined traditions established by the Mughals in the *subah* of Lahore continued in textiles, jewellery, and metalwork. "Sikh art" was the art made for Sikh patrons, but it made little contribution to the history of art.

This was the prevailing view. The tercentenary celebrations have stimulated exhibitions, conferences, and publications that are widening and deepening our understanding and respect for the period. First off the mark was "Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms", the splendid exhibition curated by Susan Stronge and organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London at the start of the tercentenary (reviewed in *Marg,* vol. 50, no. 4). Closing the year is "Piety and Splendour", curated by B.N. Goswamy and organized by the National Museum. That two separate exhibitions, of over two hundred objects each, could present a range of high quality objects from this period and region has come as a pleasant surprise. In turn, they are bound to provoke active collecting and studies which will enlarge our knowledge of the field.

The show in Delhi is gratifying not just for its objects but the quality of display. The exhibition was designed by Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, a well known theatre director, and Sumant





1
(*facing page*)
Guru Nanak subdues Kaliyuga. Pahari, last quarter of the eighteenth century. Opaque watercolour on paper. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, acc. no. 4572 (4).

2
Guru Nanak subdues Kaliyuga. Pahari, last quarter of the eighteenth century. Brush drawing on paper. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, acc. no. 2354.

Jayakrishnan, a graduate of the NID. They have painted the ceiling a deep "Akali" blue; walls are yellow, madder-red, umber, and gold like a phulkari's silk skeins. Light pools on the objects and even the fabric lining the cases has been chosen with imagination. One "distressed" wall recalls, sadly, the state of historic architecture in Punjab.

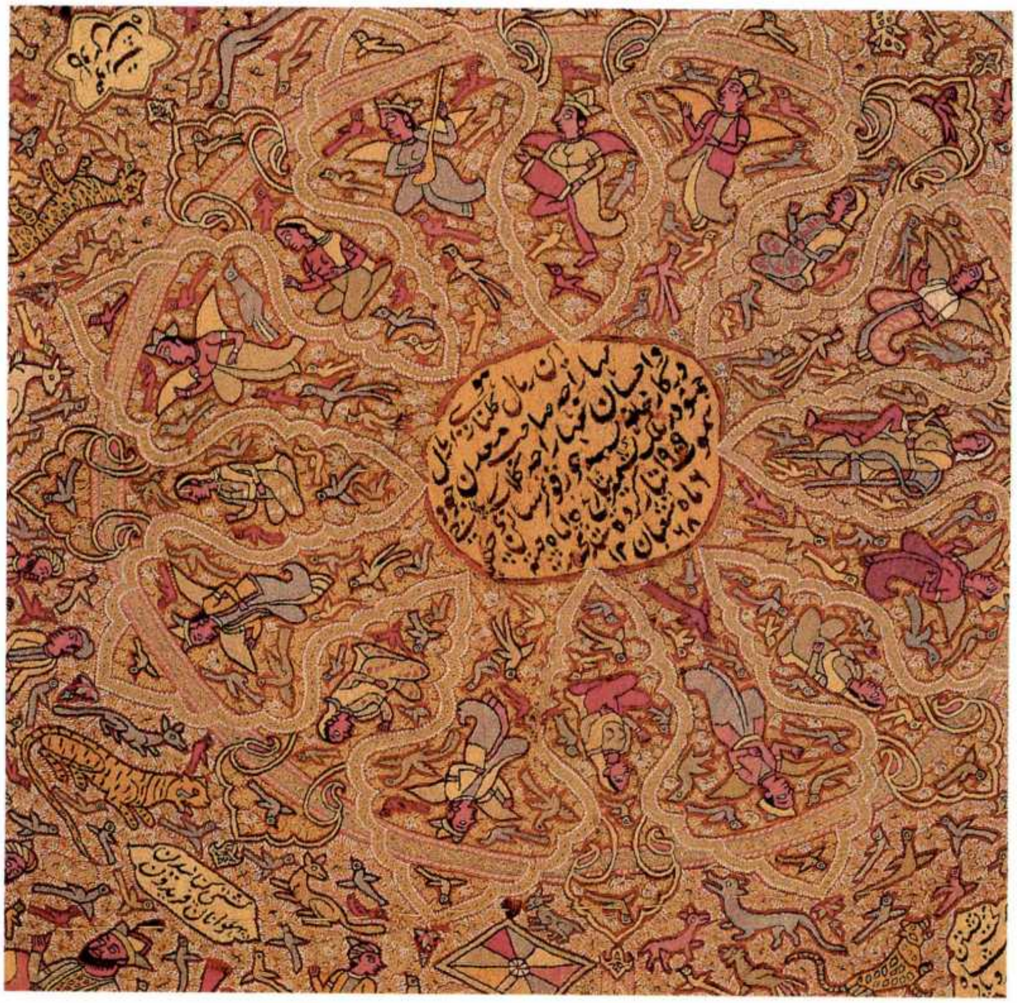
On one side of the exhibition entrance we see paintings of Guru Nanak's life; on the other, a group of beautifully fashioned spears. These encapsulate the twin themes of the exhibition, and indeed of the Sikh ethos - meditative and spiritual on the one hand and courtly and warlike on the other. The show opens with the *Janamsakhi* - hagiography of Guru Nanak's life which recounts his encounters with men, demons, and rival sects. Many *Janamsakhi* manuscripts were made in eighteenth/nineteenth century Punjab; most have rudimentary illustrations. This exhibiton brings us leaves from an uncommonly fine manuscript, and the paintings are paired with their preparatory drawings (see figures 1 and 2). It is always instructive to see the small shifts the artist makes from first thought to finished work.

The next sections bring together portraits of the gurus: first, of Guru Nanak, and then of the ten gurus. The later gurus tend to be shown as men of rank in the Mughal manner: dressed in fine *jamas* and jewels, they are either equestrian figures, or else they stand with attendants carrying a parasol or fly whisk. Guru Nanak's portraits are different. They show him as a seated, holy old man, but his holiness is conveyed through an intriguing iconographic range. The *qalandar* cap and patchwork quilt of some paintings are the attributes of a fakir, in one image Nanak is shown bare-chested, wearing a dhoti and with the earring that usually marks the "kanphata" yogis of the Nath Sampradaya. And one portrait shows him in a robe inscribed in Persian with quotations from the Quran, and from the Guru's own composition, the *Japji*. There are no known contemporary portraits of the gurus and the artists of later centuries draw upon the *lakshanas* of greatness they see in the world around them.

The lineage of living gurus came to an end with Guru Gobind Singh, who directed Sikhs to revere the Book of their teachings, the Adi Granth, as their guru: thus the *Guru* Granth Sahib. The portraits of the gurus are followed by a section on the Guru Granth. Detached leaves from an important manuscript of the Guru Granth are on display here, but religious decorum makes it difficult to show the whole book which is treated like a living guru in gurudwaras, with attendants and a round of daily rites. Instead, an anteroom houses a slide-show of leaves from an illuminated manuscript of the Guru Granth from a private collection.

Two Sikh gurus – the fifth and the ninth – were executed by Mughal emperors, and their sons took up arms, laying the foundation of the military power of the Sikhs. Finely wrought arms bear testimony to the militarization of the Sikhs. In their workmanship and forms, the weapons are Mughal – ironic, as the Mughal army was the enemy against whom these were used. A dagger that may have been Guru Gobind Singh's own is in the show; its fine jade hilt and recurved gold and steel blade are classically Mughal in design.

If the Mughal style was the model of splendour and kingliness for the gurus, this was even more so for Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who ruled from the Mughal fort at Lahore. Known mostly for his military genius, Ranjit Singh was also a keen collector of beautiful objects, particularly gems and Kashmir shawls. An English visitor to his court was dazzled by the floor, "covered with rich shawl carpets and a gorgeous shawl canopy embroidered with gold and precious stones". In the section that evokes Lahore, the jamewar shawls and patkas on the walls recall Ranjit Singh's tents hung with shawls. Set under a canopy in this room is a replica of the golden throne of Ranjit Singh. The original now belongs to the V&A, and was unavailable as it is part of their show, which is still travelling. Although the replica is finely crafted, it is still anomalous to find it placed alongside "original" objects of the show. Along



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Sikandarnama shawl.
Jammu, 1852. Pashmina embroidered with wool.
Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

with painted portraits of the kings and grandees of Lahore, are two spectacular objects. The first is a huge city map of Lahore – nearly 2 m high and 1.5 m wide – painted in the Pahari style. The second is the *Sikandarnama* shawl. Slightly larger than the Lahore map, this shawl is a square of pashmina elaborately embroidered with scenes from the *Shahnama* and the *Sikandarnama* or life of Alexander (figure 3). Along with Lahore, the exhibition includes fine works from other Sikh states, most notably Patiala and Kapurthala which were centres of patronage, but hardly ever find mention in our histories of art.

It is heartening to see a well-conceived exhibition installed with such elan. The show would have benefited from more explanatory texts on the walls, but museum exhibitions in India are seldom as attractive as this. The entire team deserves congratulations, particularly as the show was assembled, and its fine catalogue produced, at short notice when the idea that the V&A's show might come to India was abandoned. One hopes this is the standard the National Museum has set itself for its future exhibitions.

The National Museum is celebrating its own fiftieth anniversary this year with a number of special events. Before the Sikh exhibition, it mounted a special exhibition on the Supreme Court. That show too attempted to use theatrical display techniques – one gallery was a full-scale replica of the court of the Chief Justice. The show's visual appeal was however handicapped by the nature of its exhibits – mostly files, court records, and many text panels. While acknowledging the efforts of the organizers, one has to ask why the show needed to be in the National Museum, rather than in the court itself, or in a public exhibition space such as the trade fair grounds that lie so close to the Supreme Court. The museum is best left to fulfil its own mandate, to preserve and exhibit art of the pre-modern period.

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All photographs by J.C. Arora, Photo Officer, National Museum, courtesy the National Museum.

NEWSLETTER FROM MUMBAI

Monisha Ahmed

The second Kala Ghoda art festival was held in the first two weeks of February. The festival opened with an avant-garde collaboration, "Wind Wheels", art installations by Sumant Jayakrishnan and a dance performance by Padmini Chettur, at the National Gallery of Modern Art. This was followed by an art and heritage walk around the Kala Ghoda area. More than a hundred events were held during this period, covering a wide range of the arts. These included gallery and pavement exhibitions, readings, lectures, films, theatre, heritage walks and nature trails, and a seminar on folk and tribal museums. Though not strictly an art, food was also a part of the festival. Cafe Samovar held a Madhatter's Tea Party, and the garden at the David Sassoon Library played host to a re-created Irani cafe.

An exhibition on the architecture of the Kala Ghoda precinct was held at Max Mueller Bhavan. This included a documentation of the most significant buildings in the area, along with photographs, drawings, and a brief write-up on their history. It is these heritage buildings that the Kala Ghoda Association seeks to improve and upgrade. The National Gallery of Modern Art held two exhibitions. One was called "Bombay Photorama", and looked at images of people and places in the city from the 1860s to 1940s. The other was an exhibition of teapots organized by a group known as the Mumbai Potters, in which fifteen contemporary potters participated. Phillips Gallery held an exhibition of aquatints and engravings by Thomas and William Daniell. Alarmel Valli, the renowned Bharata Natyam dancer, regaled the audience as she performed in the banking hall of the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank, and Zakir Hussain enthralled all those present with his tabla performance in the Kala Ghoda parking lot against a backdrop painted by M.F. Husain earlier in the day (figure 1). Other highlights of the festival included readings by well-known personalities such as Javed Akhtar's rendition of his poetry at the event "Ways of Reading", and Gulzar's "Karadi Tales".

Getting to be an annual event now, the popularity of the Kala Ghoda art festival will ensure its continuity. Taking this one step further, the organizers mentioned the possibility of the festival expanding into an international arts festival. This would certainly put Mumbai on the map as a dynamic centre for the arts.

Amongst butter sculptures and a sand mandala, demonstrations of thangka painting and carpet weaving, momos and butter tea, the Festival of Tibet took place in Mumbai, March 12-17 (figure 2). Held by the friendsoftibetINDIA and the Tibetan Youth Congress, the festival was inaugurated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama whose message of compassion was the main focus of his lecture. If the long line of people who waited in the hot afternoon sun to hear the Dalai Lama's talk was any indication of the festival's success, it was truly justified. The handicrafts' stalls had run out of many items by the third day, and the Tibetan doctor had a continuous stream of

1
M.F. Husain does an impromptu painting during the Kala Ghoda art festival.

2
Butter sculptures at the Festival of Tibet. Photograph: Vidyadhar R. Sawant

patients. The auditorium at the Y.B. Chavan Centre, where films were screened, ran to full houses. Among the more popular films were *Tin Tin in Tibet, Kundun,* and the documentary *The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet.* However, the most endearing of the films was *The Cup* which was nominated for an Oscar this year in the foreign films category. Directed by Khyentse Norbu, a monk, the film features the events that unfolded when World Cup'98 fever took over a monastery in Himachal Pradesh.

Alongside the events at the Chavan Centre, the Prince of Wales Museum hosted the exhibition "Five Candles". This exhibition showcased the works of five photographers: Diana Barker from England, Jacqueline Meier from Switzerland, Suresh Natrajan and Vijay Kranti from India, and Lobsang Wangyal who is a Tibetan-in-exile. The photographers documented Tibetans both in and outside their country. The most appealing and original visuals were that of Lobsang Wangyal, whose work focused on the contemporary Tibetan.

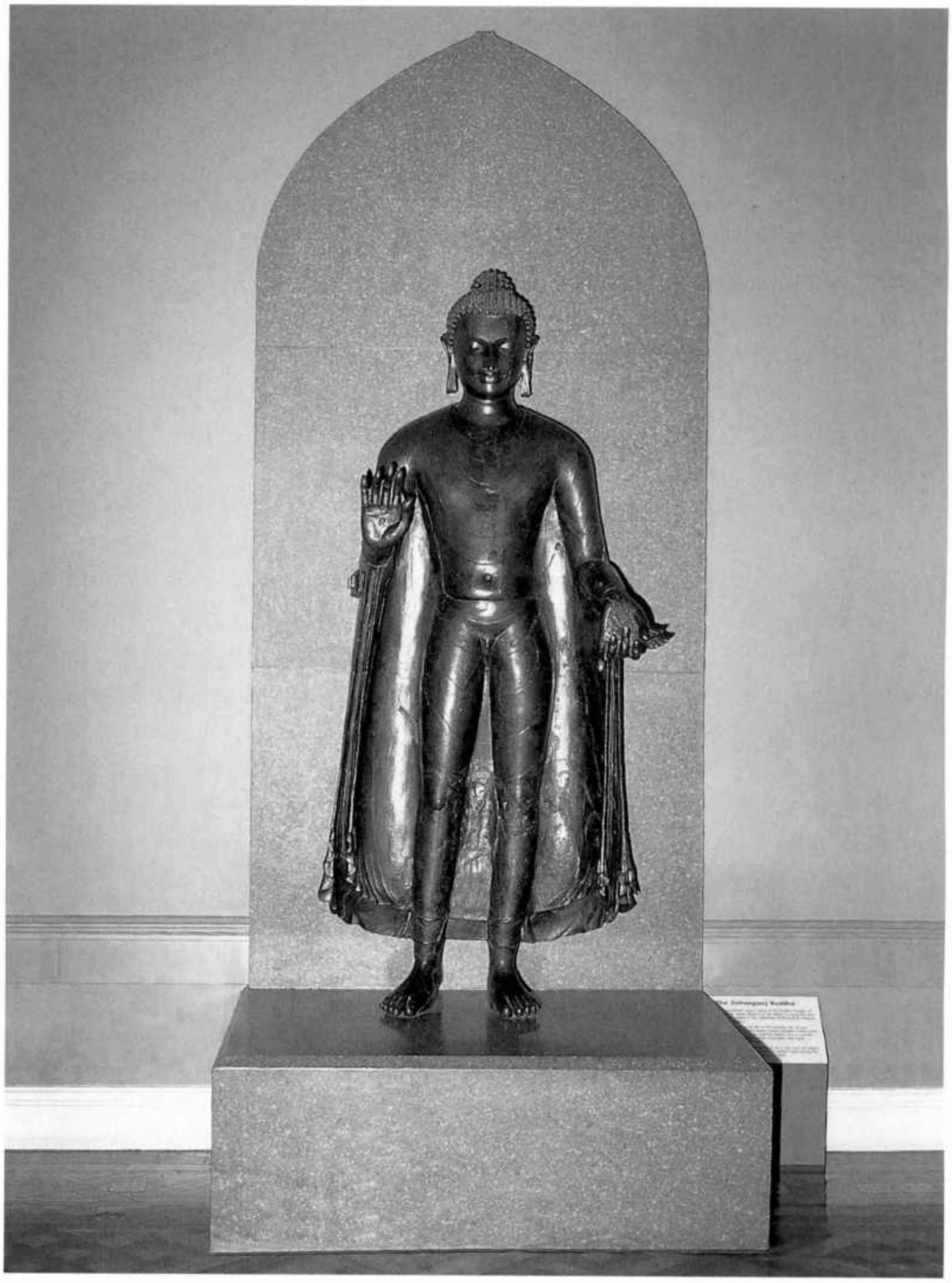
"A Sorrowful Mystery" was the title of an exhibition of contemporary art held at the National Gallery of Modern Art, March 4–19. Curated by Vickram Sethi of the Arts Trust, the theme of the exhibition was Jesus Christ and events related to his life. The recent instances of persecution of Christians in India are a painful sign of the communalism that has crept into our society, and most of the paintings at the exhibition explored this issue. At the same time, it was reassuring to note that many of the artists who participated were not Christians. Akbar Padamsee, Jehangir Sabavala, Arpana Caur, Tina Bopiah, Jaideep Mehrotra, and Karl Antao were some of the artists whose works were on show. The exhibition was inaugurated by Simon Cardinal Pimenta, who hoped that the images in the exhibition would communicate their message to people from all religions and thus be relevant to all humanity.

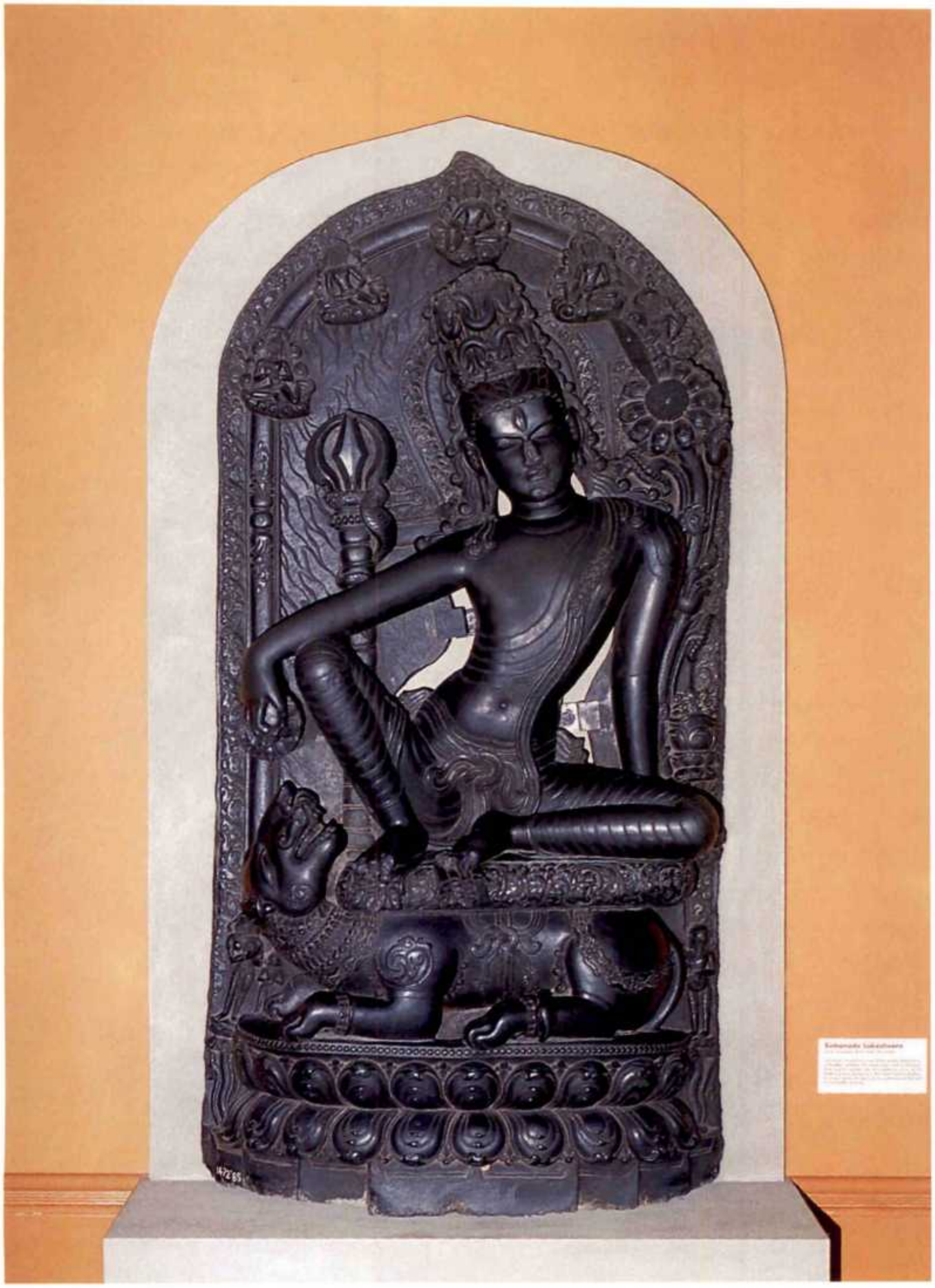
NEWSLETTER FROM LONDON

John Siudmak

Though primarily known for its important collection of pre-Raphaelite paintings of the Victorian period, the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery possesses a great Indian art treasure, the Sultanganj Buddha, which at 2.3 m high, is the largest recorded bronze image from the subcontinent. It is now displayed prominently (figure 1) in its own spacious and well-proportioned room, accompanied by other Indian sculptures, where it is greatly appreciated. Most visitors are unlikely to miss it since the room in which it stands leads to the elegant museum refectory. However, it was only in the summer of 1998, when the new room was inaugurated, that the sculpture was more or less rescued from post-Independence oblivion.

It was discovered by the British railway engineer, E.B. Harris in 1862, near the town of Sultanganj in Bihar during the construction of a section of the East Indian Railway. Harris published a short account of its discovery including a photograph of himself with the bronze and two other smaller stone sculptures of the Buddha in similar style. (One is now in the British Museum, the other in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.) As he informs us, in the days following its discovery vast crowds of villagers appeared for *darshan*, but soon dispersed when informed by local brahmins that the image was not of their faith. Following this shortlived local fame, the bronze, together with the two stone sculptures of the Buddha and other sculptures found at the same place, was shipped back to Birmingham, where it created another great stir, and it eventually entered the museum collection. A subsequent expedition funded in Birmingham in search of other antiquities was only moderately successful. The importance of the bronze was recognized by Coomaraswamy, who published it in 1927 in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art,* and it was later shown in the exhibition of the "Art of India and Pakistan" held at the Royal Academy in 1947. In both cases it was thought to date from the Gupta period in the fifth century, but most scholars would now place it in the seventh or





1
(facing page)
Pre-Pala standing Buddha, Sultanganj, Bihar. Seventh/eighth century. Bronze; 2.3 m. Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery.

2
Pala Simhananda-Avalokiteshvara group. Sultanganj, Bihar. Black schist; 1.83 m. Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery.

eighth. Following the 1947 exhibition, it was slowly forgotten about. Thirty years later, the museum director, noting that it was only insured for scrap value at £500 — its 500 kg representing £1 per kilogram — sought a valuation from Christie's the auctioneers. The valuer, who happened to be this reviewer, placed a value of one million pounds on it. Rather belatedly, the local press got on to it two years later, and the news that the neglected sculpture was the most valuable item in the museum made the headlines for several days. Despite the publicity, and its newfound importance, it was still considered somewhat of an oddity in the museum collection, and it languished outside the gent's lavatory for many years. Finally, its long wait was rewarded when the new display was devised, which "is symbolic of the change in attitude towards non-European art in England", remarks Raj Pal the museum's Modern World History curator who was actively involved in the project. Other sculptures including a stupa have been lent by the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and two other sculptures found with the Buddha at Sultanganj in the museum collection are also on display, a Simhananda-Avalokiteshvara (figure 2) and a door jamb from a Buddhist temple, both very fine examples of the Pala period. Finally justice has been done to these splendid sculptures.

These was sad news on the commercial front when Spink & Son Ltd recently announced that they would close their departments dealing in Indian and Southeast Asian art, and Himalayan and Chinese art. Spink was acquired some years ago by adjacent Christie's, whose new French owner has different plans for the building. However, the Islamic department, which includes Indian decorative art, will continue to be run as a Spink concern by Simon Ray. The new premises are yet to be announced. Further sad news is that Christie's have decided that their Indian art history course, run in association with SOAS, is also to close from this September, as is the recently inaugurated MA course at SOAS. Both developments are a serious blow to the understanding and appreciation of Indian art in this country.

NEWSLETTER FROM THE USA

Donald M. Stadtner

The focus of my last note was the perilous state of museums and archaeology in Afghanistan. This time again, I focus, not on events in the USA, but on another civilization under threat which lies on the opposite side of India's borders – Burma. These two countries are of course very dissimilar, but both were strongly shaped by Indian influence for over two millennia. Although Burma escaped a winner-take-all civil war that devastated Afghanistan's monuments and gutted its museums, the threat to Burma's Buddhist artistic heritage is more subtle but no less real.

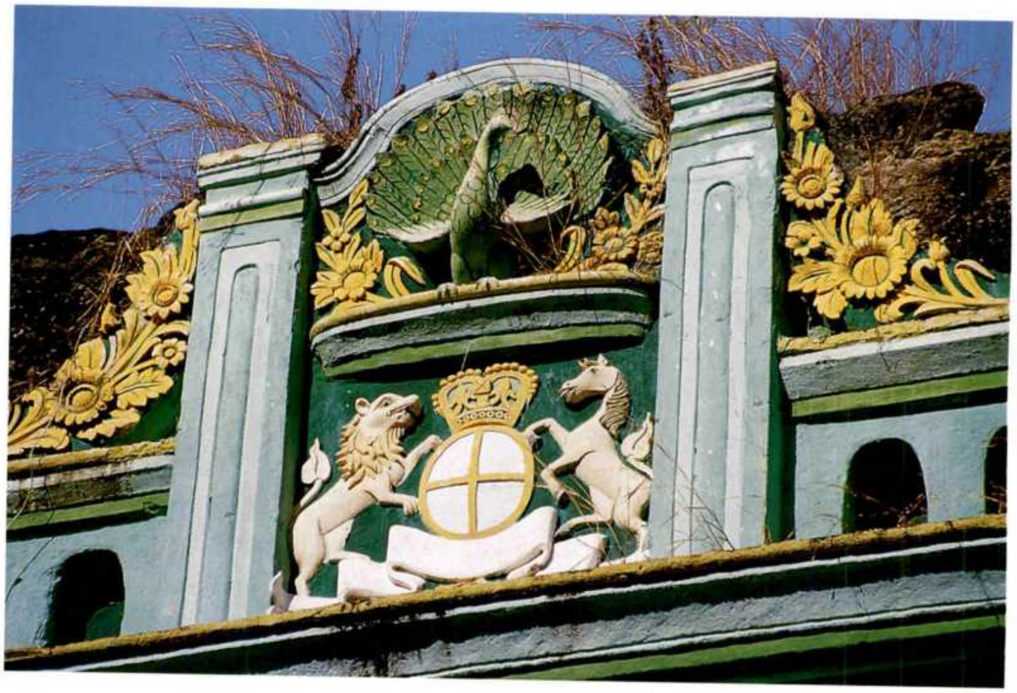
I visited Burma to participate in a conference in Rangoon during December 1999, sponsored by the Ministry of Education. Its actual organization fell to members of the Universities Historical Research Centre, a "think tank" of Burmese intellectuals based on the Rangoon University campus. Diverse historical topics fit comfortably under the encompassing rubric, "Myanmar Two Millennia Conference". (The military government changed the name of Burma to Myanmar but the new name has failed to win wide acceptance within its borders.) Roughly half the participants were from abroad, while the remainder were Burmese academics.

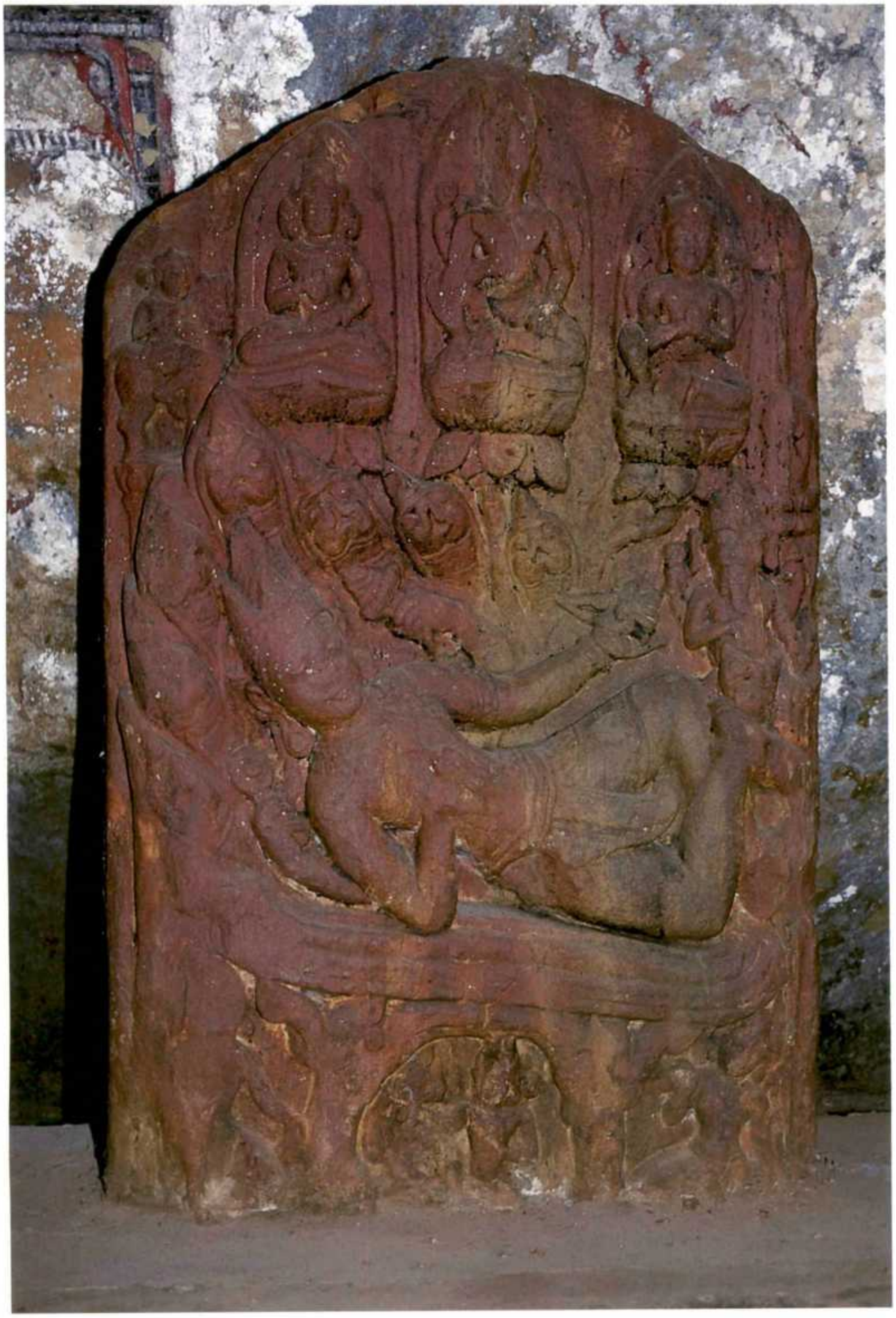
The conference venue was the government's modern International Business Centre, one of Rangoon's more spectacular symbols of the country's drive to join in the prosperity of Southeast Asia. The Centre's cold white exterior is relieved only by sheets of reflective glass, an imported architectural style totally out of sympathy with its setting near the bank of Inalaya Lake, one of Rangoon's most lovely spots. Ironically, sharing the shores of the same lake in opposite directions are new American ranch-style homes belonging to the military elite and an old bungalow belonging to Burma's Nobel Peace Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, still under *de facto* house-arrest.

Conference papers ranged widely, from new stone age discoveries to observations about the effects of colonialism on Burmese art (figure 1). One challenging paper revealed how the traditional dance and singing performances at Burmese temples were inexorably altering their character following years of Western media influence. Another lecture explored how later Burmese kings adapted an Indian coronation ritual to a Buddhist milieu.

One provocative paper by a French researcher proposed that Hindu traders were active along Burma's southeastern coast during the first millennium, a promising hypothesis yet to be tested by the archaeologist's spade. His theory is bolstered by one remarkable Hindu stone sculpture recovered long ago from this very same seaboard region, a depiction of Vishnu recumbent upon the serpent Ananta (figure 2). At first glance it appears to conform to depictions of this well-known deity in India. To our

1
Powindaung Caves, circa 1930. West of Mandalay are Buddhist rock-cut excavations at Powindaung, stretching from the eighteenth century into the twentieth. The English coat-of-arms is surmounted by the peacock, a symbol of Burma before it lost its independence in the late nineteenth century.





2
Vishnu reclining upon Ananta. Kawgun Cave, circa ninth-tenth centuries CE. 1.38 m. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva emerge from the navel of Vishnu. Ganesha appears at Vishnu's feet, a place usually reserved for Lakshmi.

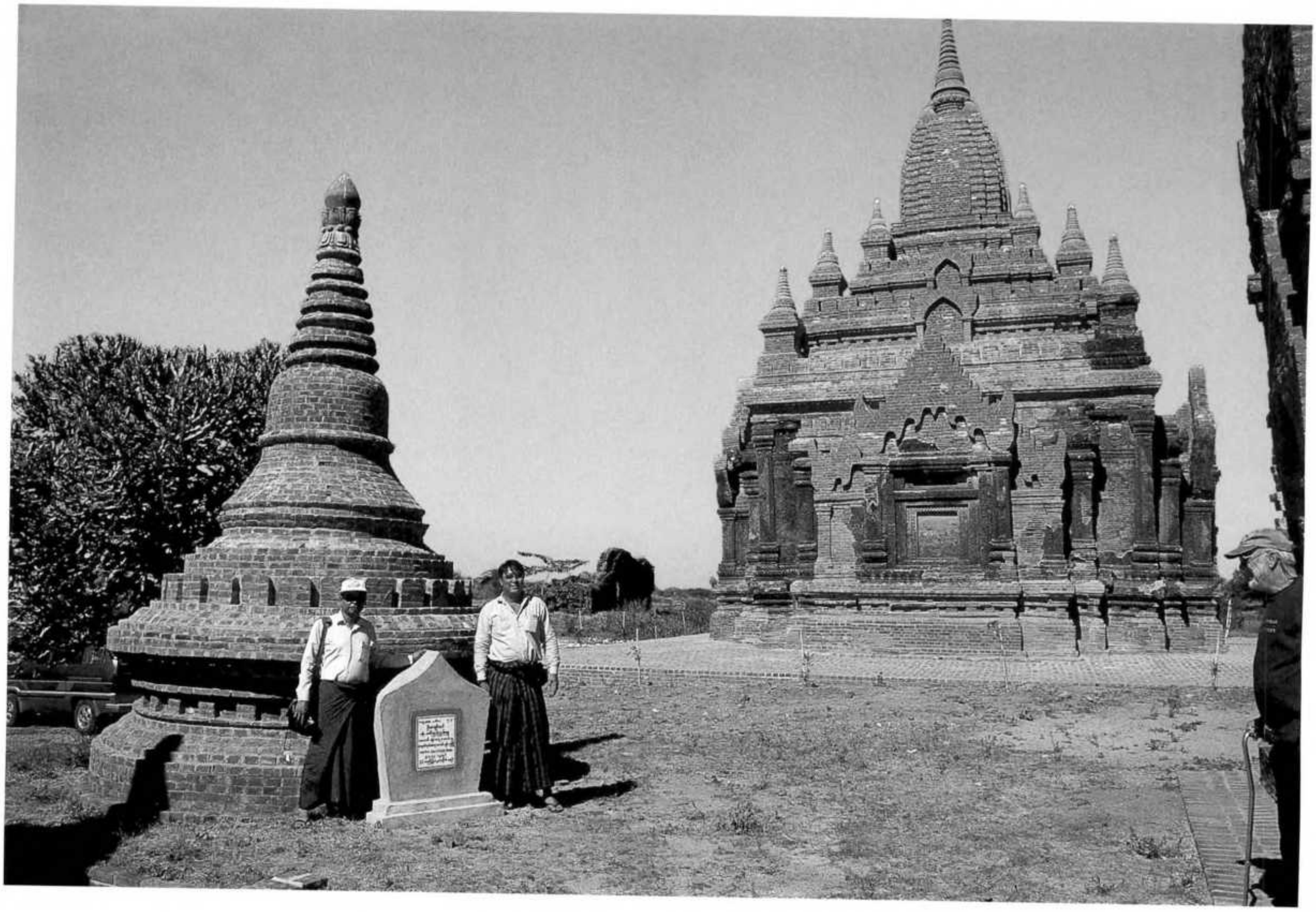
surprise, however, three gods emerge from Vishnu's navel (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva), rather than the solitary god, Brahma, which is the norm in India. This unique panel is made even more peculiar, since Vishnu's consort, Lakshmi, usually shown at the deity's feet, has been replaced with an image of Ganesha, replete with a tapering lingam above his head! This sculpture likely belongs to the ninth or tenth century and perhaps is a surviving remnant of Hindu trading communities that operated on this coast. Its odd subject matter is difficult to understand, but it is possible that Burmese Buddhist sculptors thoughtlessly (and innocently) combined a melange of visual images provided by their Indian patrons. A few other panels in Burma share the same unusual iconography, suggesting that once this unprecedented depiction arose it became standardized throughout the country.

Inevitably, discussion drifted among many participants to the government's extensive and controversial "restoration" of Pagan, although it did not figure in the official programme. Pagan is the country's premier temple site, in upper Burma, consisting of thousands of brick temples, stupas, and monasteries stretching over many kilometres. Pagan's most creative period was between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, but the site never lost its religious significance and is still the focus of patronage. Its sculpture, wall painting, and much of its temple architecture drew heavily upon eastern India controlled by the Pala dynasty. We can even reconstruct "lost" elements of Indian civilization by carefully interpreting what we find at Pagan.

The government's ambitious restoration of Pagan has triggered debate within the country and among art historians abroad ever since the Department of Archaeology was ordered to restore Pagan in 1996. Its first year began with a campaign of repairing 120 monuments, or ten a month, prompting a leading Burmese intellectual, Professor Than Tun, to label the restorations "blitzkrieg archaeology" and a "mad rush into ignominy". The timing of these restorations corresponded to the period that Burma actively started courting foreign tourists, reversing decades of tightly restrictive policies. Indeed, 1996 was the government's Visit Myanmar Year; Pagan was soon to be tidied up and "restored" for foreign guests.

At the same time the government launched a popular programme for well-to-do Burmese to not only fund the restoration of ancient monuments but also to construct entirely new stupas over the remains of ancient brick mounds! "Adopt a pagoda" is what critics have called this aspect of the restoration. Marble plaques beside the new stupas and temples list the donors' names and not infrequently the patrons are fellow Asian Buddhists, drawn from Nagoya, Chiang Mai, Seoul, etc.

Pagan has reverted to "a field of merit" in which the simple sacrifice of money translates into spiritual capital, an equation of hoary antiquity but still thriving in most religious communities worldwide.



3

Pagan. Foreground: newly created stupa above an ancient mound. Two proud donors standing before their stupa. Background: ancient temple, with eighty per cent new restoration. New pinkish brick is contrasted with the darker ancient fabric. Temple restored by the mayor of Rangoon and his wife.

To understand the radical change in Pagan's landscape we can imagine replicas of medieval Hindu temples appearing amidst the ancient clusters of temples at Khajuraho, perhaps one a week over a three year period. Or perhaps think of new caves excavated at Elephanta, Ellora, or the addition of new frescos at Ajanta.

In many cases, the brickwork marking the new rebuilding at Pagan accounts for over eighty per cent of the structure, easily discernible by the newly baked pinkish brick boldly contrasting with the ancient fabric (figure 3). The restorations are too often highly conjectural and the restored monuments display a monotonous similarity belying their original diversity. These twin problems are especially true for the summits of temples and stupas whose new, pink coloured concrete crowns are all standardized, varying only in proportions. Sculpture has also not escaped the "restoration". The original crumbling brick Buddhas within temples are shored up with new brick and painted in bright colours, producing a frightful clash with the ancient painting surrounding it. The worst case concerns three standing Vishnus outside the inner sanctum of the only surviving Hindu temple at Pagan; the four-armed figures are not only now completely covered with new plaster and painted, but hold new attributes for which there is no basis. One of the four-armed Vishnus boasts six arms today!

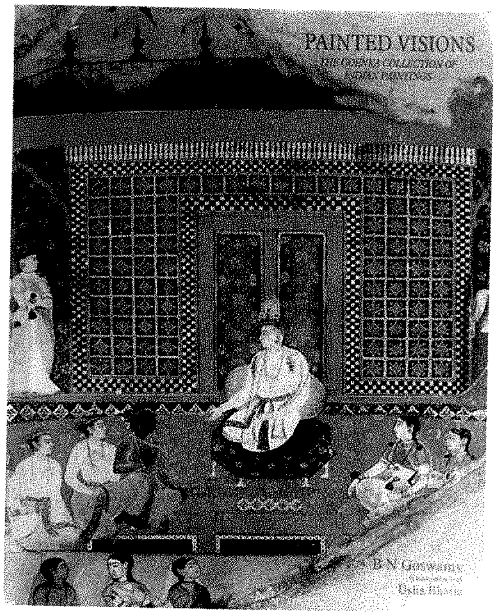
Has the government gone too far with these restorations? After all, Burma is an independent state free to do what it wishes, and this attention paid to Pagan certainly ensures that the site will not disappear altogether from neglect. Also, the new building-for-merit signals that Pagan has become a "living site", certainly a happy thing for cultural relativists or critics of hard-nosed archaeology whose dictum is that every old sculpted stone must be preserved intact. Temples have always been restored by successive generations, throughout the centuries, and certainly at Pagan this was true since the beginning. But the new restorations also destroy the historic character of the monuments. Can this "blitzkrieg archaeology" be mitigated? Perhaps a first step would be to have a full-fledged UNESCO office in Rangoon with a sub-office in Pagan. It could be modelled on what has been an effective approach in Cambodia where a UNESCO office has been established in Phnom Penh, with a sub-office in Siem Reap, near Angkor. This will ensure cooperation of the international art and archaeology community with the government to ensure a compromise between the desire for modern merit-building and the requirements of widely recognized archaeological principles.

At the end of the day, this massive restoration campaign by the country's rulers calls to mind an ancient inscription in Pagan describing local peasant women who pronounce, upon seeing their powerful king at the river bank or at a crossroads, "Such grandeur and magnificence as this is because of doing pious deeds in the past." In his turn, the king was expected to provide prosperity and social justice to his subjects, since we read in the same Pagan epigraph that even "poor old women who sell pots ... shall become rich".

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
All photographs courtesy
Donald M. Stadtner.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Painted Visions: The Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings,* by B.N. Goswamy in association with Usha Bhatia. Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1999. 308 pages including 219 plates. Rs 4000/ US$ 150.**



Though it was well-known that the Goenkas had built up a formidable collection of Indian art, they maintained their privacy and very few people had easy access to it. The only public access was through the impeccable reproductions of their paintings in calendars published by some of their family business houses or through sporadic references in some scholarly papers. I was lucky enough to get an unexpected chance to have a brief look at their collection when I was very kindly taken along by Karl Khandalavala, Moti Chandra, C. Sivaramamurti, and P. Banerjee to the sprawling Goenka house at Alipur, Calcutta, one evening in the late 1960s. In those days I was a junior official at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and looking only for Mughal materials, while Khandalavala and Moti Chandra were looking at pre-Mughal and early Rajasthani materials. The 219 splendid reproductions in *Painted Visions* took me back to that memorable evening when I was privileged to view some of the rarest and most beautiful examples of Indian painting with four of our best-known art historians.

The Goenkas were active at a time when many older collections were breaking up and very few people took interest in old miniatures and illustrated manuscripts. There was a spurt of art objects in the market when the *pothikhanas*/*suratkhanas* of many older "native" states and smaller *thikanas* were being emptied in the years following Independence. Not many people had the taste or means, or serious interest like the Goenkas who helped retain a good number of key paintings when the bulk of them were going out of the country.

The Goenka family maintained a close link with our leading art experts and art historians, that helped them to acquire many rare and fine examples not to be found in any other private or public collection in the country. To list a few included in the selection published here: the "Vijayendra Suri Ragamala" (nos. 17a, 17b, 17c, and 18), folios from the "Jashma Ragamala" (nos. 20a, 20b, and 20c), folios from the Jodhpur Library *Bhagavata Purana* painted by Govinda, son of Narada, in 1610 (nos. 25, 25a), the battle scene painted by Nur Muhammad, son of the painter Shah Muhammad, in the town of Bikaner (no. 35), the Ragamala folios from northern Deccan (nos. 66–69), the portraits of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (nos. 70, 71), the 1605 Chawand Ragamala folio (no. 79), the 1605 "Berlin Museum Ragamala" folio (no. 80), the early works of the Bikaner school (nos. 82–85), the Aurangabad *Rasamanjari* folios of 1650–54 (nos. 94, 95), the Mankot *Bhagavata Purana* folios (nos. 169–73), the remarkable tinted drawing of Lakshmi-Narayana probably from Mankot (no. 176), the three enigmatic *Ramayana* leaves (nos. 178–80) – the list could go on and on. Yet the present volume contains only a "broad selection" and one wonders how much greater the import of the entire collection would be to the student of Indian art history.

Khandalavala took upon himself the task of publishing the collection through the Lalit Kala Akademi, and Anand Krishna with his vast knowledge of Indian painting was entrusted with providing scholarly input. When for a variety of unforeseen reasons the book could not be brought out, B.N. Goswamy, one of our finest art historians, took over. With his erudite knowledge and vast experience in curating exhibitions in India and abroad, and writing scholarly catalogues, Goswamy is undoubtedly the best person to do justice to the job. Goswamy made his intention clear at the outset – "to make these thoughtfully collected paintings accessible, to enable the alert, interested viewer to enter them visually". Elaborate bibliographical references, location of other paintings from a series represented here, controversies surrounding a series or style have been avoided. This pragmatic approach has indeed prompted early publication of this much-awaited and long-delayed book as issues of dating, authorship, style, and provision of extensive bibliographical references etc. would have caused further delay – we are aware of at least half-a-dozen major projects on Indian painting stuck in avoidable and unavoidable bottlenecks! However, one cannot but regret the fact that details of some key examples from the above list and the set or manuscript from which these have come have not been indicated. How one wishes to know if the collection possesses the remaining sixteen folios known from earlier publications of the "Vijayendra Suri Ragamala" or the manuscript of the Jodhpur Library *Bhagavata Purana* or the "Jashma Ragamala" or the Aurangabad *Rasamanjari.*

Usha Bhatia's design is commendable, the production lavish with stout silk binding and costly imported art paper. The reproductions barring a few exceptions are true to life. The price is a sore point, especially when one learns that the Goenka family have shared the cost of production and the avowed aim of the Lalit Kala Akademi is to make available reproductions of our art heritage at an affordable price. The present reviewer for example, in spite of his dire need for reference, would not have been able to buy it!

Asok Kumar Das

***The Sculptural Heritage of Tibet, Buddhist Art in the Nyingjei Lam Collection,* by David Weldon and Jane Casey Singer. Laurence King, London, 1999. 205 pages, 130 illustrations, maps, glossary, index. UK£ 45.**

Published on the occasion of the autumn 1999 exhibition of the Nyingjei Lam Collection at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, this handsome volume provides a study of the development of Tibetan Buddhist sculpture as well as an exhibition catalogue. The authors have succinctly documented the history of Buddhist sculpture in Tibet, as well as formative influences from surrounding regions. All the essays are written in English, followed by their translation printed in Tibetan script. As far as this reviewer knows, this bilingual text is the first such publication for a Tibetan exhibition. It is a gesture of homage and recognition that Tibetans too may want to read about the artistic achievements and art history of their civilization.

The essays are complemented by Keith Devey's sensitive photography. Full-page colour photographs of the sculptures, views of back or profile of images – in some cases even the incised carvings of the images' bases allow the reader to appreciate the acute sense of detail and the technical finesse of casting accomplished by these sculptors of the past. The brief historic essays are lucidly written. The first chapter explains the antecedents from India, Pakistan, and Nepal; the second fully concentrates on Tibetan Buddhist

Bhurkumkuta, wrathful form of Vajrapani. Tibet, circa fifteenth-sixteenth century. Gilt copper with pigment; 14.2 cm. Nyingjei Lam Collection.

sculpture, tracing the history of Buddhism in Tibet in relation to the art-historical context; the third chapter demonstrates Tibetan veneration of the teachers by individual portraits, which often reflect the master's demeanour – ecstatic or kind, to scowling. Truly the Tibetans excelled in this genre as exemplified by the small silver image of the Eighth Karmapa, a masterful portrait casting, life-like yet inspiring.

A selection of twenty-one sculptures of Buddhas and deities are then described in terms of religious and art-historic context, while seventeen portraits of historic teachers embody the diverse doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism. None of these sculptures has been previously published. The descriptions deftly highlight one or two distinctive aesthetic, historic, or iconographic aspects which determine identification and provenance and relate the individual sculptures to comparative works of art in private or public collections.

Sanskrit, Nepali, and Tibetan inscriptions on the statues have been translated and transcribed wherever possible. It would have been helpful to see as well some in situ sculptures in Tibet in other media. Why mention the eleventh-century sculptures of Yemar and rKyangbu (p. 68) without illustrating this important school of life-size clay sculptures from available archive photographs by Professors Maraini or Tucci? Lacking such photographs, the aesthetic relation of these Tibetan clay sculptures to their Indian and Nepalese antecedents in sculptures and manuscript illuminations cannot be understood. Archive photographs of the monumental gilt copper repousse sculptures and stupas from the monasteries of Sakya and Densatil would have helped the reader to understand the influence of Newar sculptors working in Tibet in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and direct repercussions in portable sculptures, such as Newar taste for patterns of inset semi-precious stones to embellish fabrics (plate 22 Tara), or Newar taste for highly ornate, delicate tooling (figure 1).

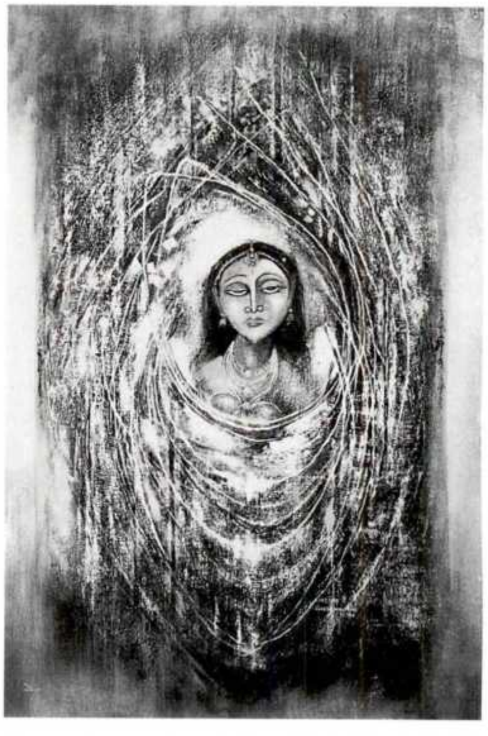
Such reservations notwithstanding, this volume presents the sculptures of the Nyingjei Lam Collection not only as art but also as reflexion of Tibetan spiritual values. *The Sculptural Heritage of Tibet* offers an elegant, concise presentation of Tibetan Buddhist sculpture.

Amy Heller

***My Search, My Evolution,* by Laxman Pai. Archana, New Delhi, 2000. 204 pages, illustrated. Price not stated.**

The sunniest and brightest sides of India happen to be both colourful and intellectually stimulating. The art and literature of contemporary India are such a phenomenon, and the women of India are involved in both. Some of India's finest contemporary art galleries were founded by women twenty-five years ago. Bookshops in major cities, and commercial galleries and museums displaying art are beehives of activity.

Different regions of India have long had distinct cultures: language, dress, cuisine. Gradually, achievements in regional cultures are receiving recognition. What a pleasant surprise to learn and appreciate the Goan roots of Laxman Pai, whose art otherwise is as Indian as a mango. This is a visual dictionary of Laxman Pai's art with a three-page essay contributed by Pai. As much as for his paintings, Pai will be remembered for his line drawings. Turn to the end, "Pen and Ink Sketch Drawings" (pp. 195–99), and the



Karuna (Navraasa Series), by Laxman Pai, 1990. Oils.

quintessential in Pai is apparent. His skills, as a maestro of form, are revealed in lines. Black and white has a grandeur, a spartan quality, haunting and incredible – at all of which Laxman Pai excelled. His paintings lack the individuality he achieved as a draughtsman.

Pai's pictorial chronology is all here, awaiting scrutiny. His early work (1940–50s), executed in tempera, is his best as a painter. His fascination with the surreal, the sexual, the "isms" attributed to his paintings, cause them to lack the vigour found in his line drawings. Pai travelled thrice to Europe, studying and working in Paris. Inspired by the *Gita Govinda*, he did promising art but switched directions continually. Losing, in the process, the style noted among paintings by Pai's contemporaries such as Gujral, Raza, Souza, to name a few.

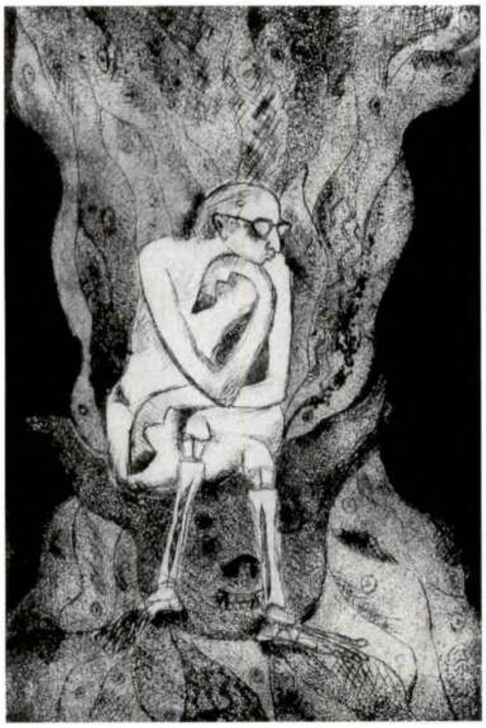
The linear strength, that marvellous line, Laxman Pai's signature it could be said, permeates virtually all his paintings. Had he stuck to line drawings and to black and white, he could have mirrored Posada, whose influence on Diego Rivera, the eminent Mexican muralist, is widely acknowledged. Posada and Kathe Kollowitz are just two of the contemporary artists who adhered to black and white. Deleting, editing, striving for nothing but the best are daunting, demanding but necessary virtues. At one stage of his brilliant career, Francis Bacon, one of the greatest twentieth-century artists – whose images mirrored the soul of his century – simply destroyed all his canvases that he felt were mediocre. Posterity has ways for measuring our journeys. *Ars lunga vita brevis*. Laxman Pai has journeyed, looked, interpreted much that he enjoyed. Most of what appeals to him and how he depicts it is included in this book.

Shehbaz H. Safrani

ALSO RECEIVED

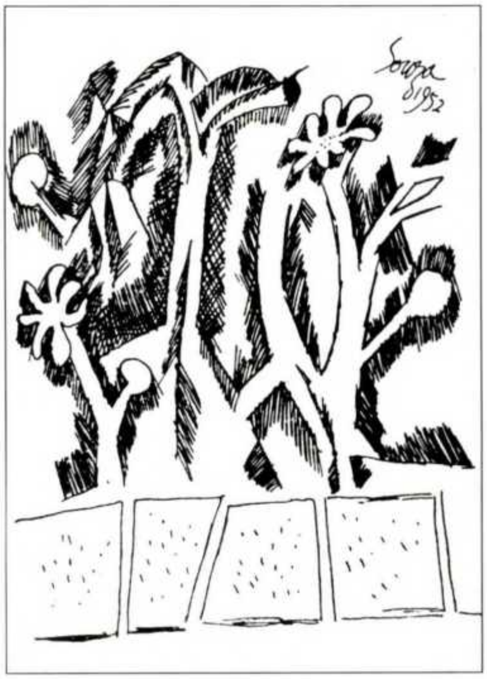
***Ratan Parimoo: Ceaseless Creativity – Paintings, Prints, Drawings.* Edited by Gauri Parimoo Krishnan. 78 pages, 24 b/w and 16 colour plates. 1999. Price not stated.**

A warm tribute to the Baroda-based artist and teacher, Professor Parimoo, in essays by members of his family, students, and art critics. Also included are reviews of his work, interviews, and many of his own introspections. The entire artistic output of Ratan Parimoo of the past four decades has been evaluated here for the first time.



Death's Arena,
self-portrait under Baniyan tree, by Ratan Parimoo, 1977.
Intaglio and dry paint on copper plate.

***F.N. Souza: Words and Lines.* First published London, 1959; new edition, Nitin Bhayana Publishing, Delhi, 2000. 40 pages. Rs 250, US$ 9, UK£ 6.**



A collection of line drawings and prose writings of the Indian artist F.N. Souza, who now lives in New York. The text is largely autobiographical, and the lively pen-and-ink sketches include several portrait caricatures, some imaginary.

CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher W. London is an architectural historian whose doctoral dissertation "British Architecture in Victorian Bombay" was written for Oriel College, Oxford in 1986. He guest edited *Architecture in Victorian and Edwardian India* in 1994, and contributed to *Bombay to Mumbai: Changing Perspectives* in 1997, both published by Marg Publications.

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Shehbaz H. Safrani writes extensively on art and taught art history for two decades at the City University of New York.

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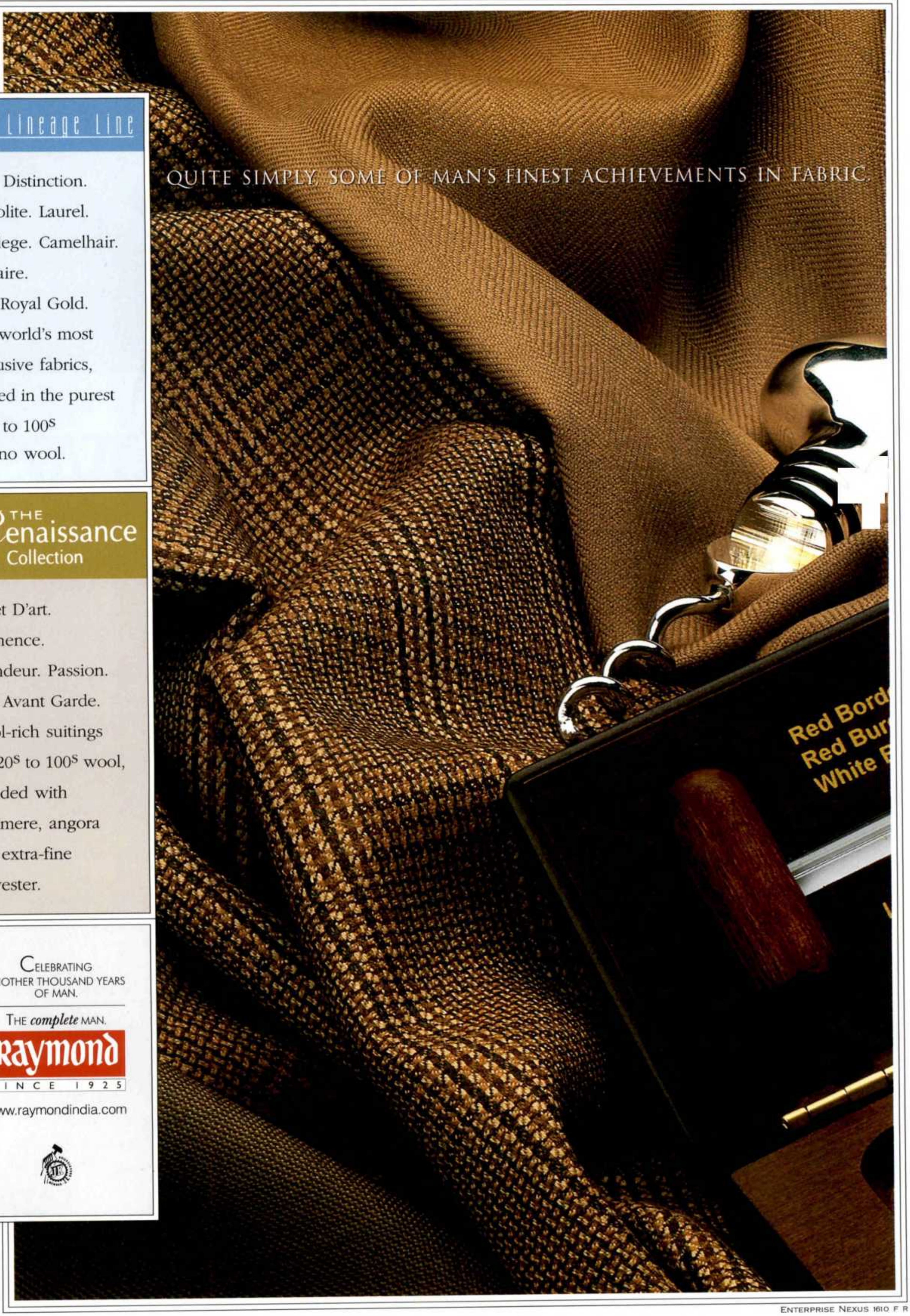
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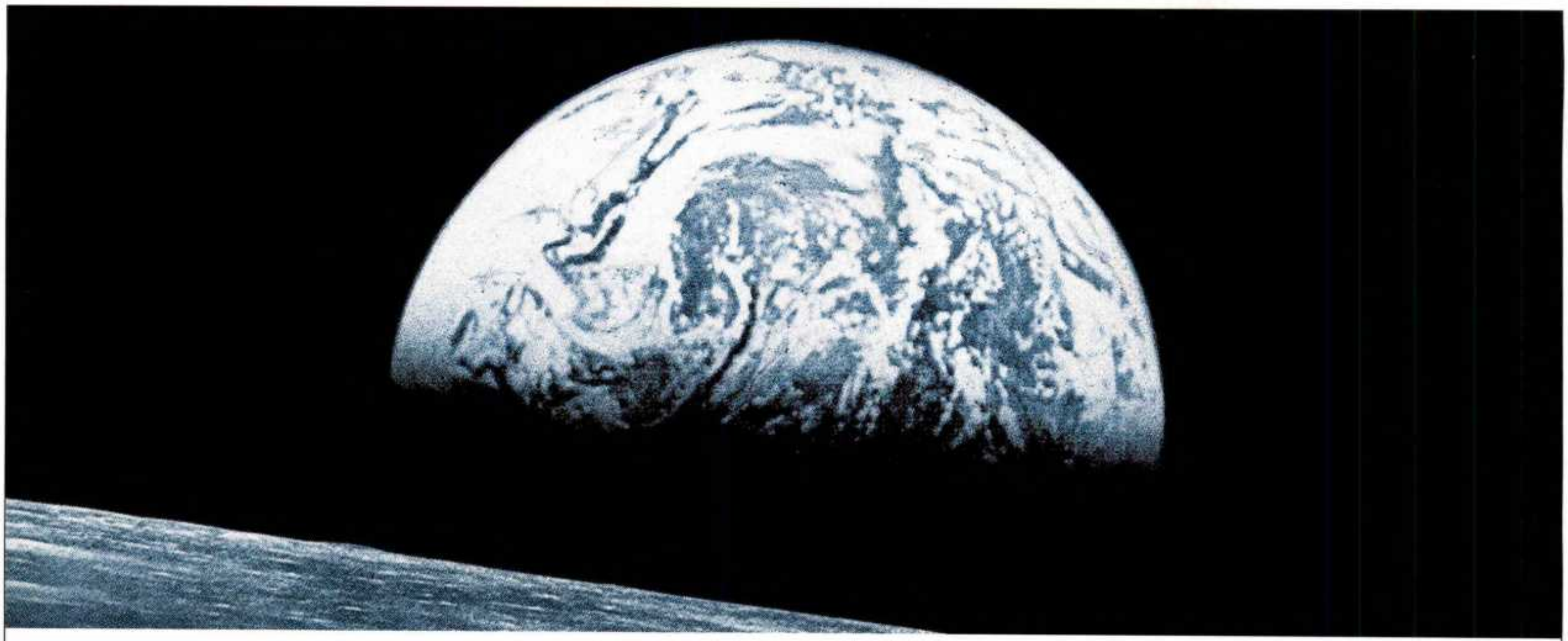

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Ahir women embroidering panels. Photograph: Jyoti Bhatt.

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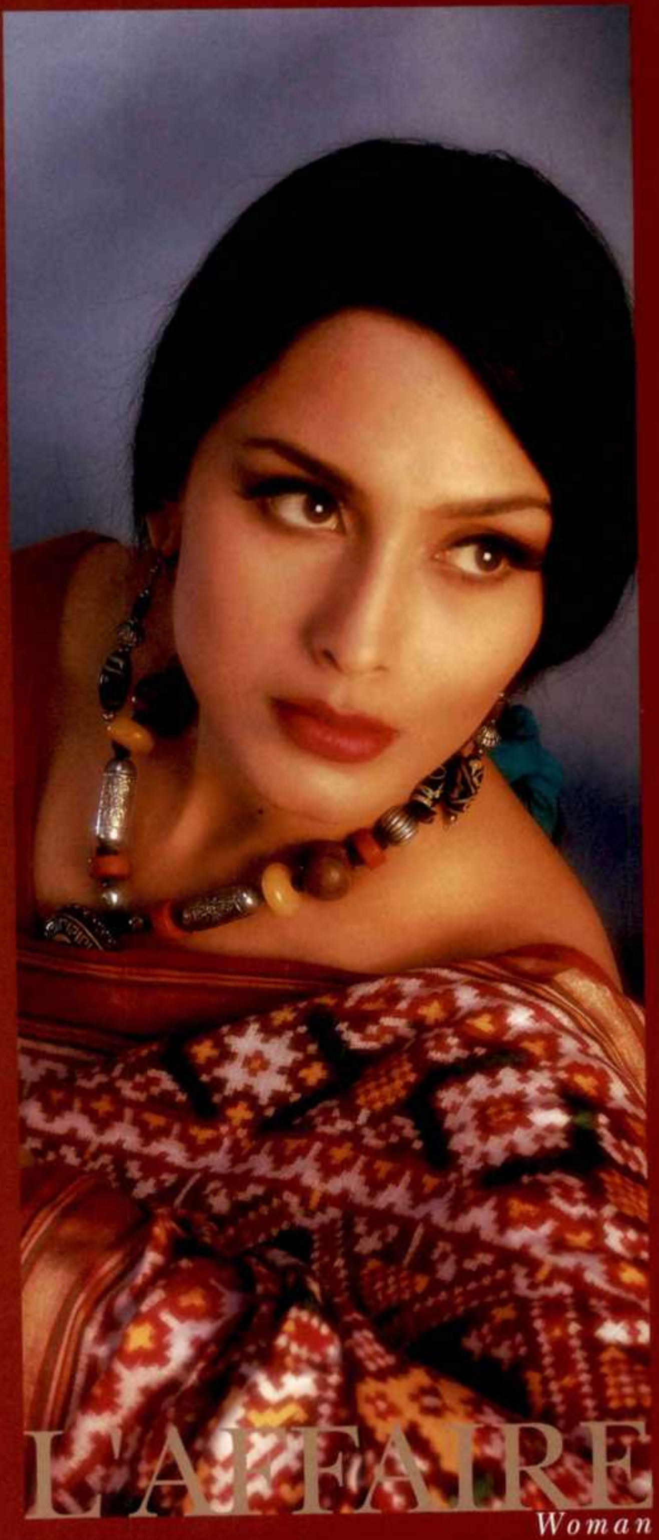

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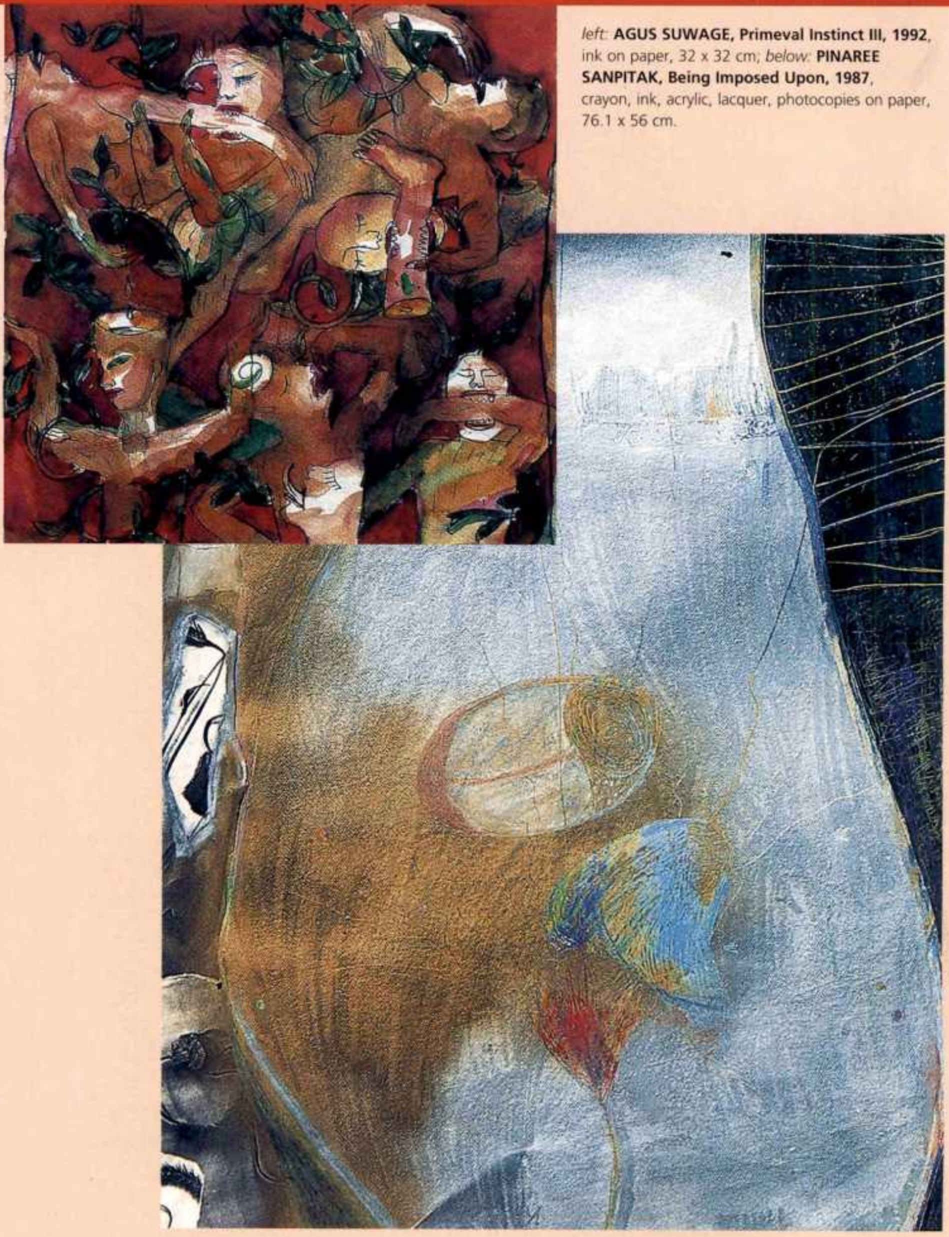

left: **AGUS SUWAGE, Primeval Instinct III, 1992**, ink on paper, 32 x 32 cm; *below:* **PINAREE SANPITAK, Being Imposed Upon, 1987**, crayon, ink, acrylic, lacquer, photocopies on paper, 76.1 x 56 cm.

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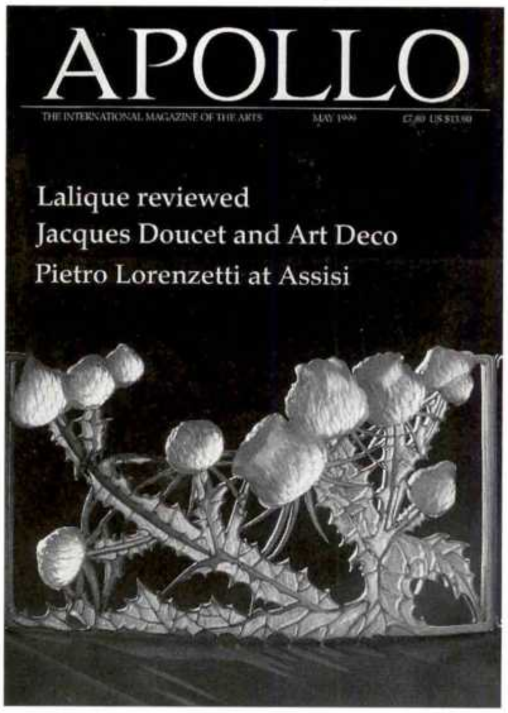
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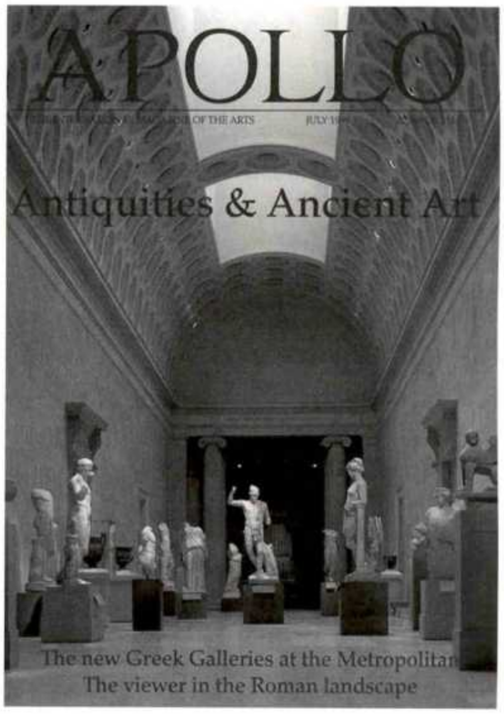
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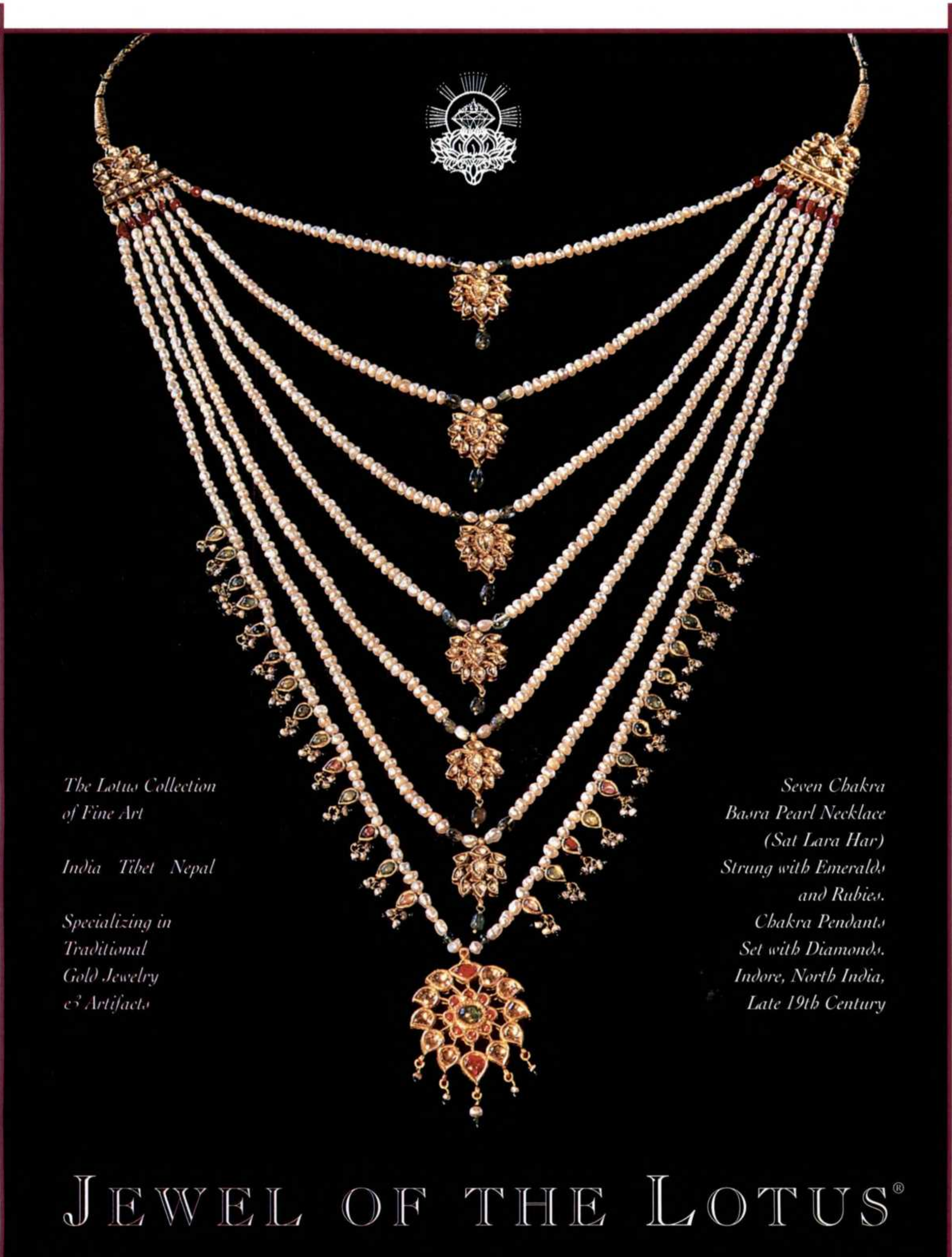

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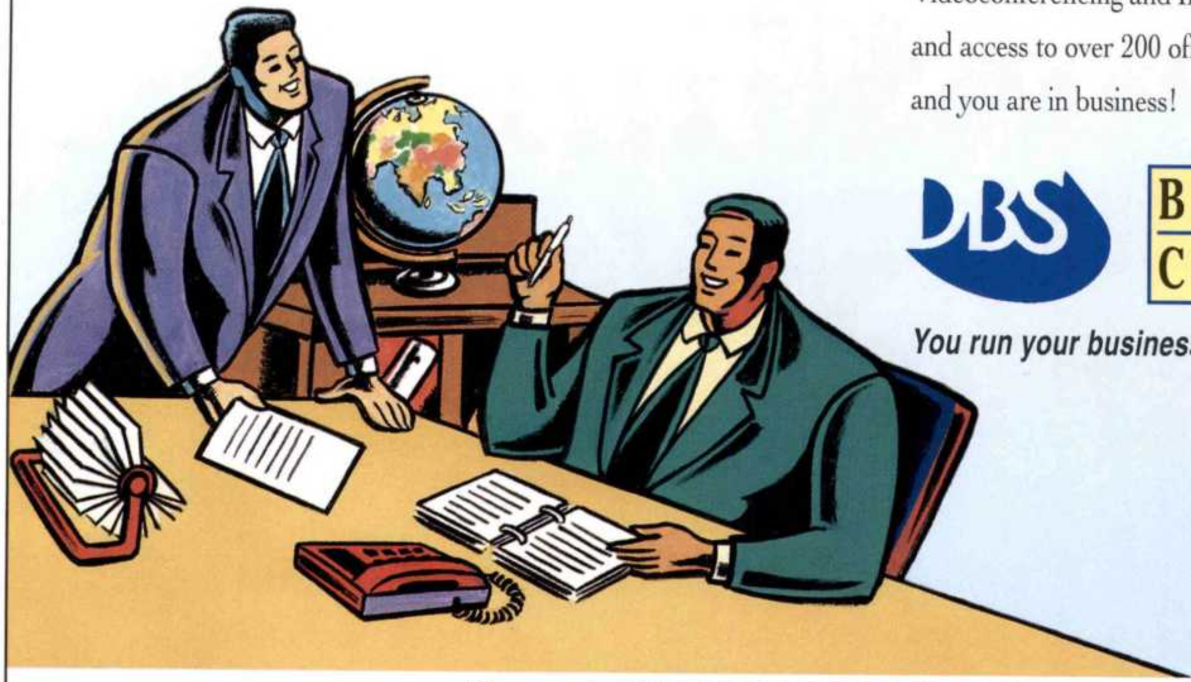

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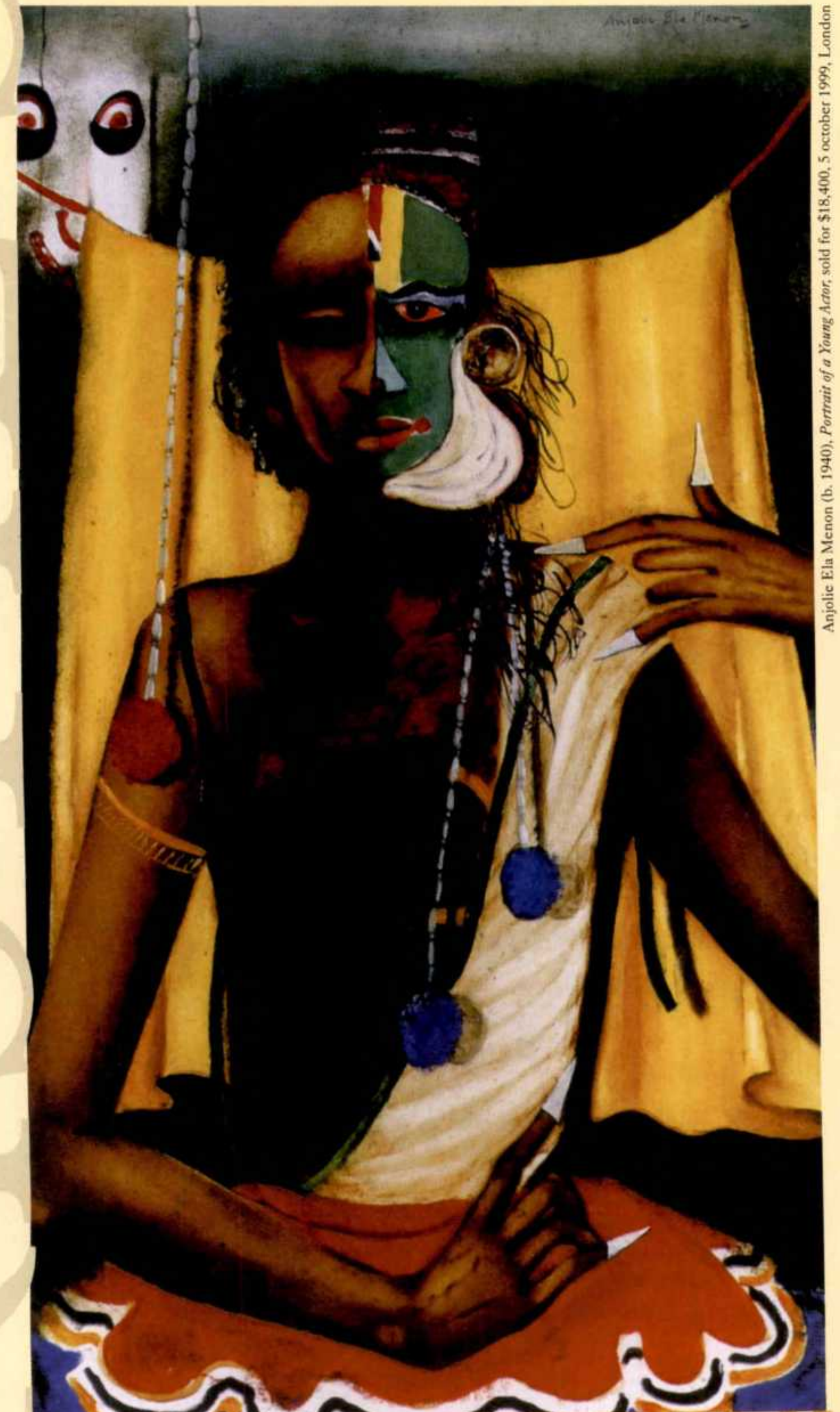

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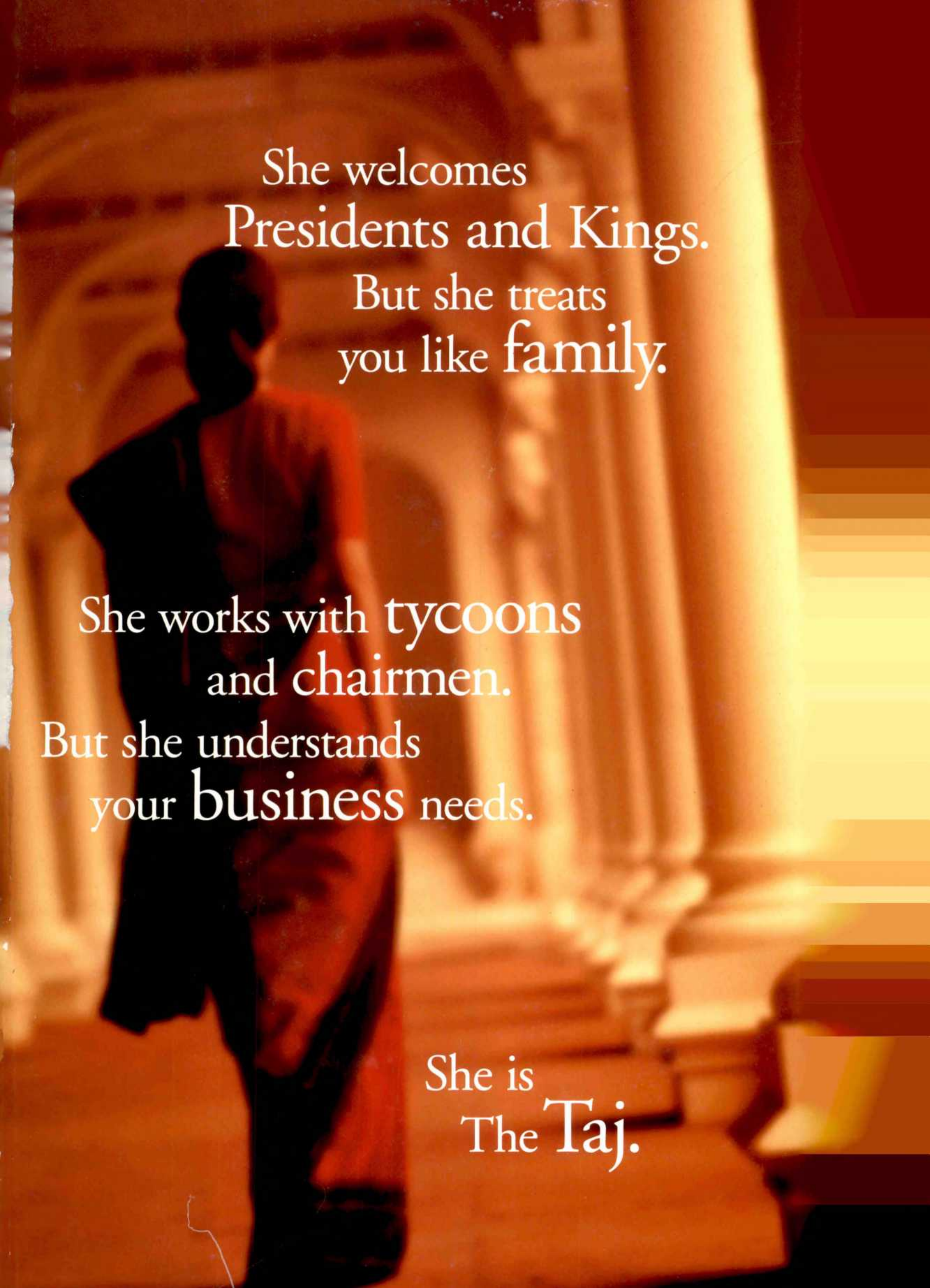
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